

REACHING AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES AGES 16-24

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A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

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In the popular Christian hymn "Lift Him Up," the opening verse asks "How to reach the masses, men of every faith? For an answer Jesus gave the key, if I be lifted up to the world I'll draw all men unto me." Before Jesus can be lifted up, men of every faith, must be reached, and taught about Jesus either inside or outside the church. In this doctoral dissertation I attempt to better understand those factors important in "reaching African-American males ages 16-24."

When considering what is happening to our young men socially, politically, economically, psychologically and spiritually today, I realize that there is a pressing need to improve their presence and participation in church. Utilizing a predominately African-American Baptist Church located in Hempstead, New York, where I am an associate minister, I began this demonstration project. My literacy research centered on some historical and present day influences that might influence the 21st Century recruitment of African-American males ages 16-24. I noticed men within this age group were disappearing from the church. I wanted to find out the reason(s) why they are missing and where they are. This led me to consider some of the consequences of failing to reach this group of young men. It also led me to look at some of the historical influences the church and religion have had on young African American males socially, politically, economically, psychologically and spiritually. I also discussed the power of influences

outside the church that are impacting young African American males' lives in this postmodern generation.

My research involved men that attend church and men that do not attend any church. This project sought to relocate the church outside it's four walls in order to reach young African-American males.

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Lastly, I am thankful for the love and devotion of my wife and family. They provide me strength when I am weak, courage when I waver and are my sure foundation.

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INTRODUCTION

WHY REACH AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES AGES 16-24?

So that servant came, and showed his Lord these things, Then the Master of the house being angry said to His servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as You have commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of My supper (Luke 14:21-24).¹

As a preacher and a close observer of most traditional black church congregations, I can't help but notice that young African-American men age 16-24 are very often absent from the church. There are many reasons and factors that are preventing young African-American males from being present and/ or participating in church. No one can deny that we are witnessing an unchurched generation of African-American men. Without a ministry to reach them, the church risks losing a generation of black men.

My present work of trying to develop a plan to reach African-American males age 16-24 grows out of the challenge here at Antioch Baptist Church of Hempstead, New York, which has a great men's ministry; but has not been successful at reaching these young men. In my preliminary analysis, I noticed men within this age group were disappearing from the church. I would like to find out the reason(s) why they are missing, where they are and how best to reach them.

¹ All biblical quotes, unless otherwise noted, are from Jimmy Swaggart, *The Expositor's Study Bible: King James Version* (Baton Rouge, LA: Jimmy Swaggart Ministries, 2005).

What is happening to our young men socially, politically, economically, psychologically and spiritually that prevents them from attending church? There is a pressing need to improve their presence and participation in church. Perhaps the greatest challenge is that a large segment of African-American men, mostly poor, are being locked out of the economic and social mainstream of America life when compared to white men from similarly poor backgrounds. Is this the primary factor preventing the church's recruitment efforts? In my earlier research, I found that 95 percent of Black men in prison can't read beyond a six grade level, and have never graduated from high school nor attended Sunday school. I also found that 85 percent of the 43 percent of African-American children in special education are males.²

As servants of God, we were and are commissioned by the Lord to go out into the streets, the highways, and the hedges of the city and compel men to come in to fill God's house. We are to reach out to the poor, the disabled and blind as well as all those that are less fortunate (Luke 14:21-24). Also found in Matthew 28:19-20 "*The Great Commission*," Jesus commanded us to take the Gospel to all nations; and He promised to be with us always even to the very end. Taking the Gospel to all nations means to also take the Gospel to African-American men. Today, we are witnessing an "unchurching" among African-American males. C. Eric Lincoln in his book "*The Black Church In The African-American Experience*," pointed to a study by Dr. Ruth Dennis of Meharry Medical school on black male youths and church attendance in Tennessee which found, "Even though we see daily evidence of the return of individuals to church, from our

² Jawanza Kunjufu, *Adam Where Are You? Why Black Men Don't Go to Church* (Chicago: African American Images Talent Center, 1994), 44-45.

study, we also see evidence of the church.....losing ground as it relates to black male youth, adolescent, young adult and adult.”³

Jesus also left us two further commandments in Matt. 22:37-40: 1) to love the Lord God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and 2) to love thy neighbor as thyself. If we truly love God, we would do as God has commanded us. When we reach out to our brothers, we are showing them that not only do we love God, but we also love them. It is very hard to reach out to people that you do not love. Whether they accept the invitation or not, we are responsible to do as God has commanded. We are also to do what John the Baptist did, to bear witness of Christ; that all men through Him might believe. I can't tell you how much I love my brothers that don't yet know Christ. We must start to reach out to our own first; our own people, in our own community. Everyone will not believe and accept Christ as Lord and Savior. However, the Bible tells us that Jesus was not accepted by all. John 1:10-12, says “He came unto His Own, and His Own received Him Not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on His Name.” As Christians, if we truly believe that Christ brought us out of darkness into the marvelous light we should be willing to share that light with the world.

We Christians also believe that God is the mighty Creator, because the Bible tells us in Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the Heaven and Earth.” We believe that God created man in God's own Image, in the Image of God created man; male and female (Gen. 1:27). Because God has made us in God's Image, we should be willing to reach those that were also made by God. We must be careful how we treat one another

³ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 322.

because God has made us and not we ourselves. Now that we know the Biblical rationale, what are the problems and challenges to our “commission?” Many African-American young and adult men feel disconnected from the church. There are a large percentage of African-American men that grew up in the church that still love God but have lost faith in the black church. These men are finding that in today’s Black church there is no place for them. John W. Fountain writes in a Washingtonpost.com article:

Sunday mornings used to mean something special to me. But I now face them with dread, with bittersweet sorrow that tugs at my heart and a headache-inducing tension that makes me reach for the Advil.....I am the grandson of a pastor and am myself a licensed minister. I love God and I love the church.....I attended umpteen services, even the midnight musicals and my church’s annual national meetings.....Yet I now feel disconnected. I am disconnected. Not necessarily from God. But from the church.

What happened? Probably the same thing that has happened to thousands, if not ten thousands, of African American men who now file into coffee shops or bowling alleys or baseball stadiums on Sundays instead of heading to church, or who lose themselves in the haze of mowing the lawn or waxing their cars. Somewhere along the way, for us, for me, church—the collective of black churches of the Christian faith, regardless of denomination—lost its meaning, its relevance. It seems to have no discernible message for what ails the 21- century black male soul.⁴

Although African-American men have often lost faith in the church, the traditional black churches have not just stopped reaching those on the outside but they are to some extent, also losing those on the inside partly because of the lack of a meaningful and relevant message for today’s African-American male. Lost Faith, lost effort, and lost message are part of the problem. Fountain goes on to write:

The church’s finger seems farthest from the pulse of those black men who seem to be most lost and drifting in a destructive sea of fatalism and pathology, with no immediate sign of the shore or of search and rescue crews. Without the church, most of those men are doomed. But it seems clear to me that the church does not –

⁴ John W. Fountain, “*No Place For Me*,” Washingtonpost.com, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/article/2005> (accessed April, 24, 2008), 1-2.

will not – seek us black men out, or perhaps even mourn our disappearance from the pews.⁵

Jawanza Kunjufu in his book, *“Adam! Where Are You? Why Most Black Men Don’t Go To Church,”* contends that 75 percent of the black church is female. Where are all the men? In order for the Black church to grow, develop and thrive, Kunjufu believes it has to increase its percentage of males and youth.⁶ Kunjufu asserts that, why Black men don’t go to church has nothing to do with the external factors such as White supremacy, racism, (both overt and institutional), unemployment, and other societal factors.⁷ It all comes back to how you train up a child. If you allow your sons to stay at home on Sunday then don’t expect them to develop the love for Christ. The Bible is specific in the way you must train up a child. Proverbs 22:6 says “train up a child in the way he should go: when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Yet another loss, Sunday school.

J.G. McCann, Sr. in his book *“How To Reach Black Men For Christ”* shares three key points from John Perkins’ analogy on the transformation of the Samaritan woman at the well. McCann said, “To evoke the Black man to a degree of intimacy with Jesus Christ, we must be willing to relocate, redistribute and reconcile.”⁸ First, the church must be willing to relocate to where our men are. We must go out and get our men. Bring the lost message to them. Secondly, the church and preacher must empower our men after they come in. There must be a redistribution of power inside the church. Restore the lost faith in the church. Thirdly, we must reconcile for past sins. The church and preacher

⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁶ Kunjufu, *Adam Where Are You*, 16.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ J.G. McCann, Sr., *How to Reach Black Men for Christ: A Christological Responds to the Moral Decline Of Black Men* (New York: Tselane Publishing/JGN Ministries, 2001), 87-89.

must reconcile with our men that have left the church. Lost effort is not an option. The Bible says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

In Luke 14:12, Jesus implores us to go out and invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind to God's House. Although they cannot repay us, we will be blessed and repaid at the resurrection of the righteous. When we invite our friends, our brothers or relatives, or our rich neighbors, they sometimes make excuses why they can't come or they only come to please us and not God. Reaching is going out and inviting those that are hungry for the Lord. We must make the effort. Some folks are not hungry and thirsty enough to eat and drink from the Lord's table. What must we do to overcome the lost faith, effort, message, and Christian education that challenges our recruitment plans. Are these the only problems and challenges?

CHALLENGE STATEMENT

Antioch Baptist Church of Hempstead, New York, has a great men's ministry; however it has not been successful in reaching young African American males between the ages of 16-24. Without a ministry to reach them, the church risks losing a generation of men. For my demonstration project, I will implement a reaching ministry designed to improve the presence and participation of young African-American males (ages 16-24) in church through a mentorship support group.

CHAPTER 1

THE SETTING

1. Geographic Location

Antioch Baptist Church of Hempstead (“Antioch”) is presently located at 94 James L.L. Burrell Avenue, Hempstead, New York where the Pastor is Reverend, Dr. Phillip Edward Elliott. Antioch is a traditional Black Baptist Church composed of baptized believers which I estimate to be about 95 percent African-American. Antioch’s membership is estimated to be about 1,500 which includes both active and non-active members.⁹ Only 16.3 percent of the estimated 75,000 African American churches in the United States have congregations that exceed 600 members.¹⁰

In the Village of Hempstead (“the Village”) there are fifty seven religious institutions. They include a vast array of denominations, including, Baptist, Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, other Christian churches, a Hindu temple, a Sikh Gurudwara, a Korean temple, a Hebrew Congregation and a host of storefront churches.¹¹ The Village is mainly African American and its population according to the 2000 census data was 56,554 people; 52 percent African American or Black, 25 percent White, and 22.3 percent other. African American males represent 44 percent of the African- American population in the Village. The population median age was 32.35. Of its population, 22.4 percent were ages 15 and under; 20.2 percent were

⁹ Antioch Baptist Church 2005 *Annual Reports: Church Clerk’s Annual Report Year Ending 2005*.

¹⁰ Kunjufu, *Adam Where Are You*, 12.

¹¹ Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia, “*Hempstead (Village), New York*” (accessed November 17, 2007).

between the ages of 16-24; 31.4 percent were between the ages 25-44; 17.5 percent were between the ages 45-64 and 8.5 percent were 65 and older.¹²

The Village also consists of several areas or neighborhoods. Antioch is located in the neighborhood called "The Heights" which is the area east of Clinton St and west of Westbury Blvd. Originally, there were only two sides of the town, The Heights and "The Hills." Over the years, several new regions, or turfs have been established, including "Terrace" (also known as "TA" or Terrace Ave.), "Parkside" or "Trackside" and "Midway" or "D-Block". At times these neighborhoods don't get along and have been known to be primary sources of crime. Parkside and the Heights have been at odds since the mid-seventies and early eighties. High School students that live on the Heights walk approximately a half an hour to reach the high school, which is located in the middle of Parkside. The Village was one of the first on Long Island that had to deal with the Salvadoran gang, MS-13 or "La Mara Salvatrucha." The on going violence this gang has exhibited has led to the formation of their arch-rival, "SWP" or "Salvadoreans with Pride."¹³

A tour of the neighborhood in which Antioch is centered would find homes surrounding Antioch sitting on 60 by 100 ft. lots where home and lawn upkeep is poor. This was not the case when I first came to Hempstead in 1968 from North Carolina. Well manicured lawns and well kept homes and streets were the norm. On Reverend James L.L. Burrell Avenue today, one finds few new homes that were built over the last couple of years. The majority of the homes were built in the fifties. One would also notice a

¹² U.S. Census Bureau American FactFinder, "*Hempstead Village, New York: Select a Race, Ethnic, or Ancestry Group*," American FactFinder, <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFIteratedFacts> (accessed September 23, 2007).

¹³ Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia, "*Hempstead (Village), New York*" (accessed November 17, 2007).

large number of two family homes in the neighborhood. Recently, what is very noticeable is the influx of Latinos who were not visible ten to fifteen years ago. Many home improvements and renovations are being performed by Latinos. I would predict that the neighborhood surrounding Antioch will be mainly Latino in the next ten to fifteen years. At the end of James LL Burrell Ave. is a small mini market parking lot area where young men congregate in front of a deli often to sell drugs. Also located across from the same corner is an elementary school ("Jackson Main") where evidence of school over crowding is seen in the two portable classrooms standing in front of the school building. The schoolyard is in poor condition and has very little space for recreation.

Hempstead school district has one of the largest school budgets on Long Island. CCD public school district data for the 2005-2006 school year had Hempstead Union Free School District budget total revenue and expenditures at \$139 million and \$132 million, respectively. Its total student population in 2005/2006 was 6,384 students; 456.1 classroom teachers; with a 14:1 student to teacher ratio. The school district had no magnet and charter schools during 2005/2006.¹⁴ In the last few years, there have been ongoing problems related to the Hempstead Board of Education including charges of corruption, political cronyism, and several indictments for assorted larcenies.

2. Institution

In 1928, the Union Baptist Church of Hempstead, NY under the pastorate of Rev. Shadrack M.B. Usry was internally divided because of many church conflicts. Reverend Usry was later called as the Spiritual Advisor to moderate a special meeting to compile a resolution to form a new church out of Union. The resolution was moved, seconded and

¹⁴ National Center for Education Statistics, "CCD Public School District Data for the 2005-2006 School Year: District Detail for Hempstead Union Free School District," National Center for Education Statistics, http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsresearch/district_detail.asp (accessed September 12, 2007).

carried. The name of the church was to be called the Antioch Baptist Church. This resolution was presented to the National Baptist Convention U.S.A. and adopted by that body on April 21, 1929. The organization of the Antioch Baptist Church, 7 Cross Street, Hempstead, NY was celebrated in an inspirational worship service. The membership consisted of 83 persons. Antioch was incorporated in 1982 for its purpose to “advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ; to seek to attain this end through the public Worship of God, the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, consistent Christian living by its members, personal evangelism, missionary endeavor, and Christian Education.”¹⁵

In the history of Antioch there have only been four pastors: Reverend Shadrack M.B. Usry, Antioch’s first pastor served eleven years from 1928 to 1937; Reverend Andrew Bennett the second pastor served twenty-eight years from 1937 to 1965; Reverend James L.L. Burrell the third pastor served twenty-nine years from 1965 to 1994; and Reverend Dr. Phillip E. Elliott the fourth and current pastor started in 1995. Antioch was first located at 7 Cross Street in Hempstead; moved to 177 Dartmouth in 1950; and on its 61st Church Anniversary on April 22, 1990 moved into its current edifice and administration building at 94 James L.L. Burrell Ave (formerly known as Union Ave). The current edifice was adjoined to the 177 Dartmouth Street Building (the old edifice) which includes a library area, a sound room, four classrooms, an administrative wing and one of the largest fellowship halls on Long Island.

Antioch is looking to expand its existing space. On September 5, 2002, the Board of Zoning Appeals, of the Village approved the application of Antioch for the purpose of constructing and renovating the current church. In 2003, Antioch started its second

¹⁵ Antioch Baptist Church of Hempstead, *Constitution and By-Laws*: New York (June 21, 1982), 1.

expansion campaign to raise funds in order to expand the sanctuary into seating 1,500.

Antioch's current membership is made up of members from various local communities in Nassau County, some from Queens, and Brooklyn. This is a change from twenty years ago when a majority of the members were only from Hempstead. Today, a large number of Antioch's members are not Hempstead Village residents.

Antioch is a very sociable church. The support that Antioch gets from church officers and members at the local, state and national levels distinguishes Antioch from its sister churches. Antioch is a member of the Eastern Baptist Association (Local), the Empire State Missionary Convention (State), and the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Antioch is actively involved in these Associations with official representation at the local, state and national levels. Antioch is also known for its great leadership ability, organizational skills in hosting banquets, ceremonies, and special worship services. Antioch is considered a great host church, hosting many Association events and worship services. Antioch's pulpit is also known as a favorite pulpit from which to preach. Its members are very receptive to the Word of God. Often times you will hear that the "favor of God is on Antioch" because it is considered a blessed House. The Spirit always seems high during Antioch's worship services.

Antioch is also very supportive of its sister churches in the surrounding area. When Antioch's Pastor is invited to preach at other churches, Antioch's members always show up in great numbers. Our Pastor plays a major part in Antioch being considered an outstanding church in the community and within Associations because of his great leadership ability, special anointing, and the many spiritual gifts that God has bestowed upon him. Pastor Elliott coined the Church motto from 1 Cor. 12:14-26 "It takes team

work to make the dream work.” Antioch is also one of the few remaining churches in the area that does not endorse women preachers. The church’s view is that the Holy Bible does not sustain, nor does the New Testament authorize women preachers.¹⁶ However, I personally do not share this view of the Bible, nor believe that the New Testament does not authorize women preachers. This difference could be viewed as an obstacle to my project in reaching those African American males that might not share this view of the Bible. Antioch is also unique in its dress code; women should not wear pants in the sanctuary.

Antioch is made up mostly of Southerners, with southern values, rituals, and customs. Over the last 25 years Antioch has gone from a church that was proud of the message in the music to a church hungry and thirsty for the Word of God. Antioch is now most known for its teaching ministries rather than its great choirs. I believe that we must first reach them that are lost; then teach them, and then the Holy Spirit will keep them. There are three levels of feeding; first when you are being fed, secondly when you are able to feed yourself, and thirdly, when you can feed others. It seems that there is not a day that the lights are not on at Antioch, because we are either having worship services, meetings, bible study, prayer service, church school, choir rehearsals, along with college and certificate classes. Antioch’s doors are always open.

3. Focus Situation

What also distinguish Antioch from other churches in the community is its Men’s ministry and the number of men in leadership roles. The Pastor is a strong believer in having men in key leadership roles. Currently, there are about 200 men attending Antioch and 180 (12 percent of the membership) are listed on the church rolls. Out of the 180

¹⁶ Antioch Baptist Church of Hempstead, *Constitution and By-Laws*, 11.

listed on the church roll only 8 or 4 percent are between the ages of 16-24. Antioch only has 1.3 percent of the 13,153 (44 percent) African American males living in the Village of Hempstead attending its services.

When we consider what is happening to our young African American males socially, politically, economically, psychologically and spiritually today, we realize that there is a pressing need in our church to attempt to solve or alleviate some of these problems. In most traditional black churches, including Antioch, you will find that there is not a reaching ministry that is active in recruiting, mentoring and retaining young African American males. Most traditional black churches are waiting for them to come in, rather than going out and compelling them to come in. My personal observation of the relationships between most traditional black churches and most young African American males today is comparable to the story in Acts 3 about the lame man sitting outside the door of the temple everyday at the hour of prayer. Members passed him by without praying for him and inviting him to come inside the temple. The question we must ask ourselves today is who are the Peters and Johns in our churches that are willing to extend an invitation and helping hand to these young African-American males that are lying outside the church in a crippled condition.

The expected outcomes of this project are: 1) to raise the awareness in Antioch and the community of faith about the need to reach out to young African-American males ages 16-24 now before it's too late (prevent lost messages), 2) to increase the visibility of the church in matters concerning young African-American males (lost efforts are out), 3) to help prevent the moral decline of African-American males in family and community (no more lost faith), 4) to promote a more positive image of young African-American

males (refocus on character and social teachings) 5) by providing ongoing mentoring and support to young African-American males and thereby increase their presence and participation in church (retaining lost Christian education).

Limitations

This study will be restricted to two other churches that do not have a reputation for reaching African-American males. The results will point to areas of more detailed study and give important information that will aid further research which focuses on African-American males. The age group is only restricted to young men ages sixteen to twenty-four. This project will also be restricted to an examination of the ways in which these particular churches attract African-American males and provide ministry to them.

Definitions

African-American males – a Black American male of African descent.

Brother – a Black man or an African-American male.

Black Church – birthed out of an increased racial identity and awareness after the abolition of slavery.

Traditional Black Church – churches with predominately black congregations that have strong institutional backing and influence. Most of these churches are influenced by Eurocentric theology and Bible images and are connected in polity (i.e. Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and United Church of Christ).

African-American Church – the recent re-identification away from the label “Black” and towards the term “African-American.”

Outreach – special programs aimed at reaching a specific group.

Ministry – the general work of the church, which can be geared towards the local church community and the community at large.

Eurocentric – of European, white –dominated descent.

Method of the Project

This project will be performed from a Baptist position. By Baptist perspective, I mean churches that place a great deal of importance in justification by the grace through faith, perseverance of the saint, regeneration, the sinless life of Christ, His death, burial, resurrection, and the second coming and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This is both a social and theological project. When the African-American male is considered, sociological, psychological and theological issues must be raised. Thus, I will consider all three of these areas as it relates to the evangelizing of the African-American male. This is not a social science psychological project, but most assuredly these areas will be addressed.

CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORICAL INFLUENCES OF THE CHURCH AND CULTURE ON AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES

Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6).

In order to better understand how the black church has responded to the social, political, economic, physiological, and spiritual challenges of African-American males, it is important to examine its past and present history. Historically, the black church has always been an institution that stood against ignorance and immorality (character and social teachings). During the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century during the revivalist movement, the black churches main goal was the moral and social development of Black America (character and social teachings). Towards this goal, they regularly issued moral pronouncements against alcoholic beverages, gambling, dancing, divorce, sexual promiscuity, and breaking the law.¹⁷

Programs and training schools were established in order to train and teach young people about how to rear children dedicated to the task of race leadership and to become servants to their race (character and social teachings).¹⁸ What we are witnessing today in the black community and among black youth and young adults is an increase in immorality (lost character and social teaching). Moral and social developments are not the main focus of most black churches today. In fact, most black churches today do not

¹⁷ Peter J. Paris, *The Social Teaching of the Black Churches* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 64.

¹⁸ Ibid.

focus on youth development. C. Eric Lincoln said, "A major problem for many contemporary black churches is the disproportionate focus of their programs and efforts on adults. Black youth, especially young children became a kind of afterthought in the church's schedule of significant ministry."¹⁹ In our questionnaire of African-American men that attend church, 56 % felt that their church was having difficulty recruiting and maintaining African-American males ages 16-24 because of a lack of programs of interest (lost of Christian Education programs).

According to Peter J. Paris, early black churches took on a dual leadership role: (1) to protect and defend the race against the onslaughts of racism and (2) to "uplift" the race from moral degradation of slavery.²⁰ Early black churches were interested in the education, economics and civil rights of African Americans. Black churches were also interested in changing the perception of how whites viewed blacks during that time (character and social teachings). Paris writes:

The black churches long believed that the education of blacks was not a mere end in itself, but instead a means for changing white public opinion about blacks. All believed that if whites would see more and more blacks embodying gentle manners, excellence in speech, good moral character, industry, and goodwill would cease stereotyping blacks according to the boisterous behavior of black masses.²¹

The early black churches believed that they had a moral obligation to uplift their people through education by establishing their own schools (Christian education). Paris writes "blacks viewed education and civil rights as necessary conditions for economics development. To combat racial discrimination and segregation in education, the black

¹⁹ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 316.

²⁰ Paris, *The Social Teaching of the Black Churches*, 66.

²¹ Ibid., 68-69.

churches established a variety of schools, many of which were partially supported by monies from white churches and liberal philanthropists.”²²

Black churches were also strong proponents of racial pride to help uplift blacks against racist propaganda. Paris writes:

Blacks had been told for so many generations that they were an inferior race that many had become vulnerable to believing it themselves. This danger must have constituted the ultimate threat to the churches, since a belief in one's own inferiority inevitably must lead to such a state of demoralization that change is virtually rendered impossible. Thus the racial struggle had to be waged not only against the racism of white America per se but also against the tendencies within the race to believe racist propaganda. The latter function has always been correlated closely with the cultivation of the twin values of self-reliance and self-respect, both of which are exemplified in the development, maintenance, and improvement of religious institutions.²³

The principal obstacle to racial advancement for blacks in the earlier black churches was thought to be the denial by white America of equal rights for the race. Paris writes “the churches believed that the entire plight of black Americans was caused either directly or indirectly by white America's denial of full and equal citizenship rights to the race.”²⁴ This accepted view gave earlier black churches a common goal and agenda as well as a platform for the civil rights movement. The black churches were on one accord to actively support the civil rights movement in obtaining equal rights for all races in general, but mainly for Blacks. This led to solidarity among black churches in the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century until the end of the civil rights movement.

During the “Great Migration” after the First World War as blacks arrived in the North from rural communities of the South, we saw the deradicalization of traditional

²² Ibid., 70.

²³ Ibid., 71.

²⁴ Ibid., 71.

black churches taking shape. The influx began in 1915 and continued in waves through the Second World War.²⁵ First, middle-class families in the North, were uncomfortable with newly arriving brothers and sisters from the South, and became less inviting and more selected in welcoming them into their congregations. Second, lighter colored blacks were joining white denominations which caused a reduction in attendance in traditional black churches. Another group of blacks were drawn to marginal Holiness and Pentecostal churches and various cults that led to a decrease in attendance at traditional black churches. A fourth group of blacks remained outside the church altogether that formed the beginning of black urban people uninterested in church affiliation.²⁶ This group turned their backs on black churches because of their betrayal of whites (black power) and alienation by middle class blacks. Gayraud S. Wilmore writes, "Blacks abandoned in the ghettos, were becoming, in the years following the First World War, the most secularized population in America. Bereft of the moral and social pressures of the southern ethos, deeply disaffected by the unending betrayal of whites, and embittered by the antagonism of the Negro middle class, many newcomers to the city turned their backs on the Christian church."²⁷ One of the most secularized groups of men in this country today, is our young black men. A large number of our black men are disenfranchised. Many are disconnected from the church and this has led them to find psychological security in street culture. They also have discovered that the American dream is a horror show and they have lost faith in the black church and its leaders.

²⁵ Ibid., 171.

²⁶ Ibid., 172.

²⁷ Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of African Americans* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 200.

Migration to the cities has been the most significant phenomenon to impact traditional black churches in the 20th century.²⁸ However, although urban churches grew and prospered as a result of the great migration north, traditional black churches were guilty of not being an active agent of social change. Lawrence N. Jones writes:

There are now persons in the pews who were born in the city, who are secular in their outlook, who are keenly aware of the ways in which their lives are shaped by structures which they do not control, and who are concerned that their religious institutions should be active agents of social change. This new constituency requires programs of Christian nurture that address the consciousness, realities and urgencies of contemporary urban life. In this connection the church must become bilingual: it must understand the language of the world and translate the gospel into idioms and symbols of that language. Christian nurture must also be bifocal. It must keep its eye on heaven, but it must not fail to see the world at hand and seek to enable persons to wrest meaning and significance from their lives in it.²⁹

Jones goes on to say, that “churches must be concerned that large numbers of young people never come within the sphere of their teaching or influence; and family structures must be reinforced, and churches must be active agents and participants in organizations seeking to help communities improve themselves.”³⁰ Churches must become more realistic to the social changes that young people have to face today. Jones writes, “Black churches need not abandon their historic mission agendas but rather should consider them in the light of new realities in the world where [their] mission must be implemented.”³¹

Black churches seem to be stuck on traditionalism. Jim Petersen writes:

Every culture is ethnocentric. Almost all of us think our ways are the best and that others are inferior. Ethnocentrism is necessary for survival. Ethnocentrism begets tradition and tradition is the handing down of beliefs and customs from one

²⁸ Milton C. Sernett, ed., *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 585.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 585-586.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 586.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 588.

generation to another. Personal identity is also related to traditions of a culture. Every culture has its own tradition in art, music, dress, cuisine, etc. As we grow up we acquire favorites in each of these areas within the range of choices approved by the culture.³²

Petersen mentioned the important distinction that Jaroslav Pelikan made in his work *Vindication of Tradition*, that "Tradition," is the living faith of the dead, [whereas] traditionalism is the dead faith of the living (lost faith). "Traditions are established customs, often handed down through the generations and generally observed. Traditionalism is the excessive respect for tradition that gives it the status of divine revelation."³³ Such traditionalism prevents the church from attracting the African-American youth of today.

According to C. Eric Lincoln, depending on the congregation, between 66 to 80 percent of its membership is usually composed of women. There is about 2.5-3 females to every male member.³⁴ There are many reasons and factors that are keeping young African-American males from being present and/or participating in church. Today, we are witnessing an unchurched generation of young black men. Lincoln and Mamiya write about one concerned C.M.E. pastor related in his survey interview in Harlem, "for the first time in black history, we are seeing an unchurched generation of young black people growing up in urban areas. Today, there are teenagers out there [in the street] who have no knowledge of and no respect for the black church and its tradition."³⁵ Lincoln goes on to say:

The new generation of black young people, who were born in northern and western urban areas after the civil rights era in the 1970s and 1980s,

³² Jim Petersen, *Church Without Walls: Moving Beyond Traditional Boundaries* (Colorado Spring, CO.: NavPress, 1992), 142-143.

³³ Ibid., 146.

³⁴ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 304.

³⁵ Ibid., 310.

represents this potentially large unchurched group to which the pastor referred.³⁶

Bakari Kitwana in his book *"The Hip Hop Generation: Young Blacks and Crisis in African-American Culture"* further identifies this new generation of African-Americans born between 1965 and 1984 who came of age in the eighties and nineties and who share a specific set of values and attitudes as the hip-hop generationers.³⁷ At the core of their thoughts about family, relationships, child rearing, career, racial identity, race relations, and politics is a complex worldview different from older generations that came before them. Kitwana who identifies himself as part of the hip hop generation said:

For us, achieving wealth, by any means necessary, is more important than most anything else, hence our obsession with materialistic and consumer trappings of financial success. Central to our identity is a severe sense of alienation between the sexes. Likewise, our perspective on personal relationships and marriage is more likely to take into consideration concerns as diverse as our parents' generation's divorce rates and child support enforcements laws, and we are more likely to be open to family arrangements other than the traditional American family. At the same time, our views of politics, race relations, and racial identity are more likely to have been shaped by Jesse Jackson's 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns, the 1992 Los Angeles riots, and/ or the Million Man March. Our views on or about safe sex are more likely to have been influenced by Easy E. or Magic Johnson's public announcement regarding themselves and HIV/Aids.³⁸

Lewis A. Drummond in his book *"Reaching Generation Next"* calls this group born after 1965, "Generation X or Busters, and the next generation."³⁹

I like what Jawanza Kunjufu said, "it seems like everybody is looking for the Black male; Black women are looking for a good Black man to marry; Black children, especially Black boys, are looking for Black men to nurture them and give them a sense

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Bakari Kitwana, *The Hip Hop Generation: Young Blacks and the Crisis in African American Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 4

³⁸ Ibid., 6.

³⁹ Lewis A. Drummond, *Reaching Generation Next: Effective Evangelism in Today's Culture* (Grand Rapid, MI: Baker Book House Co., 2002), 4

of direction; schools are looking for dedicated and consistent African American men to volunteer for role models and rites of passage programs; and Black churches are also looking for them.”⁴⁰ The most important question for all of us that have sons that Kunjufu wanted to know, “is our son in church?”⁴¹

Two major challenges that confront black churches today mentioned by Lincoln and Mamiya are: the problem of identity among young black children and the issue of the growing sectors of unchurched black teenagers and young adults.⁴² Drummond mentioned that the major challenge for the evangelical church today is to confront the validity of the new worldview.⁴³ We are now living in a post-modern era where this generation’s approach to life and reality is different from older generations (lost faith).

Traditional black churches must change the way they function to survive. Jim Petersen writes “when we look at the church, we view it through a traditional paradigm. However, willingness to change is necessary before we can take on another paradigm.”⁴⁴ Our reluctance to change what we are familiar with about church because of what we know, or thought we knew about church clouds our vision to see another paradigm. Petersen goes on to say “we all know churches have sanctuaries, pulpits, pews, and a clergy. For us it is difficult to think of a church without any of these familiar components. But what if for some reason, it suddenly became impossible to have these things? Would the church cease, or could we change our paradigm and carry on?”⁴⁵ What we are

⁴⁰ Kunjufu, *Adam Where Are You*, 4.

⁴¹ Ibid., 17.

⁴² Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 310.

⁴³ Drummond, *Reaching Generation Next*, 4.

⁴⁴ Petersen, *Church Without Walls*, 18.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 18-19.

witnessing in our society today are several paradigmatic changes simultaneously, but our churches are not responding to these changes (lost message). Petersen said:

We are making many cosmetic changes, but our basic perceptions remain unaltered. We continue to think “sanctuaries, pulpits, pews, and clergy.” These will undoubtedly continue to serve those of us who have church heritage, and a certain number of those who do not. But we haven’t asked what it will take to make the gospel truly accessible and transforming to the rest of this society. Do we have the creativity to assess the true needs, and the mobility to go into our world in an effectual manner?⁴⁶

When considering why traditional black churches are not reaching our young men

today, we need to pay close attention to changes that are taking place in our culture. For example, Kitwana writes:

For our parent’s generation, the political ideals of civil rights and Black power are central to their worldview. Our parent’s generation placed family, spirituality, social responsibility, and Black pride at the center of their identity as Black Americans. They like their parents before them looked to their elders for values and identity. The core set of values shared by a large segment of the hip-hop generation-Black America’s generation X-stands in contrast to our parents’ worldview. For the most part, we have turned to ourselves, our peers, global images and products, and the new realities we face for guidance that anchors our worldview.⁴⁷

Black youth and young adults are searching for their own identity and looking for ways to have a voice in this post modern generation. Kwame Anthony Appiah in his book “*The Ethics of Identity*” writes “one thing identity provides is another source of value, one that helps us make our way among many morally permissible options.”⁴⁸ Unlike past generations today’s black youth are no longer just deriving their values and identity from traditional community institutions. Kitwana said “today the influence of traditional purveyors of Black culture such as community institutions, as family, church, and school have largely diminished in the face of powerful and pervasive technological advances and

⁴⁶ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁷ Kitwana, *The Hip Hop Generation*, 7.

⁴⁸ Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2005),

corporate growth.”⁴⁹ Peter J. Paris writes that one of the primary functions of parents, teachers, and various institutions is moral education-guiding, training, and nurturing the young in knowing, obeying, and affirming the culture’s basic values.⁵⁰ Black youth are more and more turning to rap music, music videos, media, designer clothes, television programs and black films for values and identity. Traditional black churches are having a lesser and lesser affect in shaping their core values and identity (lost Christian education). This new revolution of culture change stands in direct conflict with black traditional churches. Also, this self-sufficient postmodern generation of young people is becoming more and more humanistic in their ways. Drummond writes:

A number of young people and others believe in an impersonal, uninvolved God. They are for justice and reason, even spirituality in a vague sense, but they reject a personal experience of an involved God and any form of personal revelation truth. Their image of God has been reduced to that of an ill-defined force or intelligence that has nothing to do with practical, everyday life on earth.⁵¹

Jim Petersen writes:

This movement is difficult to describe, as it does not have an organized set of beliefs. Yet, as a movement, it is organized. It is becoming an eclectic world religion that resembles Eastern religious systems, rather than biblical religion. Its major premise is that all is one: nature is God, man is nature, and therefore man is God. Nature becomes the center by which humans find their meaning. Its basic message is that you create your own reality. It is a close relative to Hinduism.

As New Age beliefs elevate nature, they accordingly devalue human life. Suddenly people find their lives have no priority over any other form of life. Belief in reincarnation helps to further justify this position.

The ideas of the New Age Movement are now pervasive in American culture. It has major influence on science, education, politics, art, and media. The ultimate objective of the movement is to create a new political set of values and standards, to shape a new global political and social vision.

⁴⁹ Kitwana, *The Hip Hop Generation*, 7.

⁵⁰ Paris, *The Social Teaching of the Black Churches*, 57.

⁵¹ Drummond, *Reaching Generation Next*, 53.

New Age is especially attractive to America's unchurched generation. Many are finding they cannot live on secularization and have begun to search for a religious experience that neither established religions nor science has been able to provide. In New Age, people find a medium through which they can perform religious rituals such as chanting, yoga, and meditations, but that leaves the self and its natural desires unchecked. It has been described as a form of hyperselfism.⁵²

What we are experiencing in America today, are the four falls that Petersen draws a striking parallel found in Romans 1:18-32: (1) a spiritual fall, (2) an intellectual fall, (3) a moral fall and (4) the fall of society. He describes a spiritual fall as a fall away from God into confidence in self. An intellectual fall is when man rejects God as his point of reference and finds himself in confusion. A moral fall is when man allows his desires to dictate and take over without God. The fall of society is when society approves of man's uncontrollable desires which lead to things that rip a society apart.⁵³

Today's traditional black churches are caught up in the middle of this postmodern generation and are searching for ways to reach and understand these cultural changes. Michael Eric Dyson in his book *"Know What I Mean?: Reflections on Hip Hop"* mentioned that "a generational divide looms large in black life. When it comes to culture and the like, a lot of older black folks simply baptize their biases and make them the basis of what is authentic about black life, particularly when it comes to culture."⁵⁴ We are living in a time when many young African-American teenagers and young adults are questioning the need for God and don't see the relevancy of black churches in regard to their own lives and beliefs (lost faith). Drummond writes "one of the largest groups of present-day doubters of Christianity are those who believe in God but only in a

⁵² Petersen, *Church Without Walls*, 42-43.

⁵³ Ibid., 44-45.

⁵⁴ Michael Eric Dyson, *Know What I Mean?: Reflections On Hip Hop* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2007), 8.

nonpersonal way. They see him as a great force, the creator of all; perhaps even in some sense a “personality.”⁵⁵ The hip hop generationers are only concerned with what is good for them. Culture is what is good for man. H. Richard Niebuhr in *“Christ & Culture”* writes:

Culture is concerned with what is good for male and female, child and adult, rulers and ruled; with what is good for men in special vacations and groups, according to the customary notions of such good. Moreover, all the individuals have their special claims and interests: and everyone in his individuality is a complex being with desires of body and mind, with self-regarding and other-regarding motives, with relations to other men, nature and supernatural beings.⁵⁶

Subsequent to the civil rights movement and the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., traditional black churches had a difficult time adjusting to change associated with the success of the civil rights movement. Traditional black churches did not have a plan for going forward once they reached their goal in achieving equal rights in white America. James H. Cone said:

The black church community really believes that where there is no vision the people perish. If people have no dreams they will accept the world as it is and will not seek to change it. To dream is to know what is ain’t suppose to be. No one in our time expressed this eschatological note more clearly than Martin Luther King, Jr.⁵⁷

What is the future for traditional black churches? Are traditional black churches radical enough to attract today’s young African-American males? One reason why young people are attracted to rap music and its lyrics is because the message in rap music is more real than the message coming from pulpits (lost message). Historically, the message from the pulpit was about our past struggles and was thought to be more real than the message in today’s music. What issues and struggles are traditional black churches

⁵⁵ Drummond, *Reaching Generation Next*, 52.

⁵⁶ H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ & Culture* (NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001), 38.

⁵⁷ Sernett, *African American Religious History*, 572.

involved in today? Cone said “many black people view the church as a hindrance to black liberation, because black preachers and church members appear to be more concerned about their own institutional survival than the freedom of poor people in their communities.”⁵⁸ Many present day churches are more interested in District Attorneys’ programs to get guns off the streets for cash and locking up local drug dealers than mentoring young men. This is not to say that removing guns from the streets and locking up drug dealers are not needed. However a more cogent agenda and focus would be to change the mindsets of young black men in our community. What vision do we have for black youth today? What is the dream for tomorrow? How can black churches go from slavery to freedom; from an invisible institution to a visible institution; from no rights to civil rights; from a battleship to a cruise ship; to “I’ll find a way or make one;” to “We come this far by faith;” and “I am free at last, thank God Almighty,” to “Where do we go from here?” Also, how does the black church actively engage and attract young black men (lost efforts)? Lawrence N. Jones writes “what is in jeopardy is the capacity of the churches to attract urban dwellers in large numbers while church programs are geared to a 19th century rural ethos.”⁵⁹ Lawrence goes on to say “historically, black churches have been clergy-dominated. This situation must change if religious institutions are to continue to attract gifted persons to their company.”⁶⁰

Gayraud S. Wilmore writes:

The civil rights movement began to show signs of serious disability when Martin Luther King, Jr., and the SCLC staff ran afoul of northern white power in the form of the Chicago Board of Realtors and the Daley machine during the long, hot summer of 1966. But, finally, amid great consternation and confusion, it died with the tragic assassination of King on April 4, 1968. During those three years

⁵⁸ Ibid., 574.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 585

⁶⁰ Ibid., 586.

fitful years---1966 through 1968---the African American community in the United States went through a hardening process from which it did not recover during the more placid 1970's, and, indeed it has not yet quite recovered today.⁶¹

After King's death, liberal whites began to withdraw from the civil rights movement because they did not want to be associated with the violence associated with the birth of the new "Black Power Movement." Leroy Fitts in *"A History of Black Baptists"* writes "the decades of the seventies witnesses high black unemployment, street violence, drug addiction, and a gradual decline of the black church and family. Some of these problems resulted from the general rise of secularism and the new morality in American culture. Blacks were largely caught up in the general spirit of the age."⁶² These social issues of high black unemployment, street violence, drug addiction, high rates of black male incarceration became the tipping point for the reduction of African-American males in traditional black churches. All of the five lost are negatively impacted by these social issues.

Another problem troubling the early black churches was that they had been race institutions working on the behalf of the black race but preaching the basic theology of the white church (lost message). Paris writes:

A traditional conflict in the moral thought of the black churches has centered on dual loyalty to the functions of (1) serving the needs of the race and (2) serving the Lord of the church. On the one hand, black churches have been race institutions, always working in the interest of the race by preaching freedom, civil rights, temperance, and industry. On the other hand, however, the churches have been religious institutions with a strong sense of obligation to be faithful to the Redeemer, whom they worshiped at the source of ultimate truth and whose eschatological vision they employed as their criterion for social criticism.

The tendency of the black churches has been to employ the thought patterns of the white churches in articulating their theological understandings. Whenever called upon to justify their social reform activities, they have had no difficulty appealing

⁶¹ Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 222.

⁶² Leroy Fitts, *A History of Black Baptists* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1985), 290.

to those common theological understanding. But in the main, black churches have seen no need for sustained theological and ethical reflection that might lead to the development of a systematic body of thought....Moreover, by affirming the basic theology of white churches the black churches have failed to see the disservice they rendered themselves, since the thought patterns of the white churches were not always commensurate with the activities of the black churches, especially those pertaining to the systematic explication of their social thought.⁶³

Whites felt no moral obligation to practice what they preached. According to Paris "white America experienced no dilemma between its theological thoughts and the way it treated blacks. For white America it was not a matter of believing true justice while preaching injustice. Rather, in that respect, the white churches actually experienced no alienation between their thought and practice."⁶⁴ Yet another weakness of the earlier black churches according to Paris is that no critical, systematic theology of the black experience emerged until the late 1960s. What grew out of the earlier black churches appears to be its artistry of preaching, music and songs more than its literary word.⁶⁵ In my view, another reason why black traditional churches are not reaching young African-American men today is because the church is not radical enough in responding to conditions in this country. Cone writes, "when I speak to young blacks in colleges and universities, most are surprised that a radical black church tradition really exists.....Whatever happened to the black churches today? Why don't we have the same radical spirit in our preaching and churches?"⁶⁶ Gene McDaniels writes "black radicalism has been and continues to be a form of protest specific to the black community in a struggle for freedom and a more humane existence."⁶⁷ What our young people identify with in rap music, gangs and black films is black radicalism which is missing in traditional black churches (lost message). It

⁶³ Ibid., 74-75.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 76.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 77.

⁶⁶ Sernett, *African American Religious History*, 473-474.

⁶⁷ Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 198.

is this radicalism that attracted a million plus men to the Million Man March on October 16, 1995. It is this black radicalism that is also attracting African-American men to become Muslims. We must give our young men reasons to attend black churches and get actively involved (new message). Throughout our history there were reasons and causes to fight when the odds were against us. Traditional black churches must stir up this gift within in order to attract young African American males (new efforts). Where is the fire within the traditional black church? How can traditional black churches get the fire back (new faith)? Who put the fire out in traditional black churches? Traditional black churches caught fire during the Civil Rights Movement. They were actively involved during the Black Power Movement, but they lost it to the Hip Hop Generation. Where is the renewed faith, the new message, new efforts, and Christian Education?

CHAPTER 3

WHEN THE CHURCH FAILS TO REACH

Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the Temple asked alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said look on us, and he gave heed unto them expecting to receive something of them (Act 3:3-5).

Having examined the “lost” problems, the present challenges and problems, as well as what the traditional Black church must historically overcome to reach out to African-American males, we now will explore what failure will mean.

In order to preserve and save our young African-American males from rapidly becoming an endangered species, I would like to use two verses of scripture found in Genesis 45:7-8 from the story of Joseph as a rallying cry: *“You are my brother: I was sent to preserve your life and to save your life.”* It is up to us to help preserve and save our young African-American brothers from the self-destruction taking place in our society, today. First we must ask ourselves “Am I my brother’s keeper?” If we are, then we need more brothers and leaders like Joseph who are God sent in order to preserve African-American male posterity in the world, and to save them through a great deliverance. We also need more brothers and leaders like Peter and John in Acts 3:1-11 who will teach our young men how to get up from cripple and lame situations and stand upright before God. It is time to say “no more lame situations, no more lame excuses, no more cripple situations,” it is time to stand up and be a Godly man who is also a strong man. We must urge brothers that they should be tired of those temporary fixes because

they simply do not work. Temporary fixes like designers' clothes; drugs and alcohol; silver and gold which will only leave you in cripple and lame situations. Joseph was able to get up from his crippled and lame situations and help preserve and save his brothers so they could have a future in the world. We must convince brothers that they are not lame men; they are strong men of God. How do we know? It is because God made and created us in God's image to have dominion in the world and to preserve our posterity in the world.

The story of Joseph has a similar correlation to the lives of young African-American males in this country today. Joseph was abandoned by his brothers and sold into slavery. He was removed from his family, country and social setting. He was put down, stripped of his identity and garments, and cast away. He was also left to die with no food or water. In Vincent L. Wimbush's essay, "*The Bible and African Americans: An Outline of an Interpretative History*," he cited:

The experience of being uprooted from their African homeland and forced to labor in a strange place produced in the first African slaves what has been termed a type of disorientation.....the first African slaves experienced a type of "social death," cut off from their roots, including their languages and religious heritage. This is what slavery was supposed to mean in the eyes of many.⁶⁸

In addition, Joseph was falsely accused of rape and incarcerated. Joseph had to face rejection and hatred from his own flesh and blood. But, Joseph was a dreamer with big dreams of becoming a ruler one day and he met his dream killers at an early age. African-American children especially boys have always been told not to dream about becoming the president of the United States because it would never happen; not to dream of going to an excellent university like Harvard or Yale because these institutions would never

⁶⁸ Stephen E. Fowl, *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Classic And contemporary Readings* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing LTD, 1997), 71.

accept them; and not to dream about being a CEO of a Fortune 500 Corporation because they would not succeed at that level. However, today these are no longer dreams, they are realities. I remember going up to my son's high school to meet with his guidance counselor early in his senior year because the counselor had him on track to go to a local community college. I had to put a stop to that. After showing and taking an interest in my son's future, my son was accepted to sixteen colleges and eventually chose to attend and later graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA. I wish many other young men had a father in the home that could represent and give them guidance in life. Many of our young African-American men are being abandoned by their fathers, stripped of their identity, left for dead by the federal government, rejected by society, "hated on" through systems of racism and discrimination, falsely accused by the media, and incarcerated by an unjust judicial system. Like Joseph many young African-American males are faced with dream killers. When the black male homicide rate is 7 times that of the white male rate, it is a dream killer. Gun homicide has been the leading cause of death of black men between the ages of fifteen and thirty-four since 1969. Today, like thirty years ago, young black men are likely to die at the hands of another black male.⁶⁹ Like Joseph's brothers attempting to kill him; today we are witnessing black on black crime, brothers killing brothers in the African-American community. When the number of college-aged black males in prisons and jails in the U.S., is greater than the number of black males enrolled in higher education, this is another dream killer. For 16-24 year old high school graduates the unemployment rate for Blacks is 25 percent and it is twice the rate of Whites and Hispanics, this is another dream killer.

⁶⁹ Kitwana, *The Hip Generation*, 21.

In a questionnaire of African-American males that do not attend any church, 92 percent felt that being unemployed was a big problem for African-American males and 62 percent felt unemployment is strongly influencing our young men. In a similar survey taken by *The Washington Post*, 85 percent of black men think that not having good jobs is a big problem for black men today.⁷⁰ In 2005, it was reported that 11 percent of Blacks ages 16 and over were unemployed higher than Hispanics (6%) and Whites (5%). These are just a few dream killers that are destroying young black men and the black community today. Besides unemployment, a common experience for many black teens and young adults, especially males, is imprisonment.⁷¹ Demico Boothe in his book "*Why Are So Many Black Men In Prison?*" writes, "Black men are being targeted, criminalized, and imprisoned at a genocidal rate in the United States of America and no one seems to really understand why or care much about it."⁷² According to C. Eric Lincoln the rate of recidivism to prison varies with age. Younger inmates between ages seventeen to twenty-four, have the highest rates, 60-70 percent.⁷³ The Bible says: "my people are destroyed for the lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).⁷⁴

The Bible also says that Joseph was seventeen years of age when he started having dreams. It is at this tender age when young men should be dreaming of going off to college to get an education and not worrying about being unemployed or incarcerated. I was seventeen when I completed high school in June of 1977 and preparing for my first year in college. I was dreaming of becoming an accountant. Today, I am a licensed

⁷⁰ Staff of the Washington Post, *Being a Black Man: At the Corner of Progress and Peril* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2007), 318-319 and 323.

⁷¹ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 323.

⁷² Demico Boothe, "*Why Are So Many Black Men In Prison?*" (n.p.: Full Surface Publishing, 2007), 1.

⁷³ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 323.

⁷⁴ C.I. Scofield, D.D., *The New Scofield Study Bible: Authorized King James Version* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 6.

certified public accountant in the state of New York. I graduated from college in 1982 with a degree in accounting. In a questionnaire of African-American males that do not attend any church, 78 percent of the men felt African-American males generally put too little emphasis on education. When asked whether young African-American males are not taking their education seriously enough is a big problem, little problem or not a problem, 91 percent of these men felt it is a big problem. In a questionnaire of African-American males that attend church, 83 percent felt African-American males generally put too little emphasis on education. In a similar survey taken by *The Washington Post*, 73 percent of Black men felt black men generally put too little emphasis on education and 91 percent felt young Black men not taking their education seriously enough is a big problem.⁷⁵

When comparing the results of my questionnaires and a survey taken by *The Washington Post* the percentages were about the same. When it comes to education the Bible teaches us in II Tim. 2:15 “study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.” Also found in II Tim 3:14-15 the Bible says “but you continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them and that from a child you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto Salvation through Faith which is in Christ.” No matter how difficult life may get we must hold on to those things that we were taught as a child, to trust in the Lord and always look to where our help comes from. Our help comes from the Lord. The Lord said “Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Jos.1:9). The Lord our God will be with us always, even until the end of the world (Matt. 28:19-20).

⁷⁵ Staff of the Washington Post, *Being a Black Man*, 318-319.

In Genesis chapter 37:1-2 it opens with “And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. These are the generation of Jacob.” To show historical application to African-American males, I am paraphrasing from Genesis 37:1-2 “and the black man dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of America, home of the brave and land of the free. These are the generations of African-American males; slaves, victims of Jim Crow and segregation; victims of Bull Connor’s dogs and fire hoses; organizers of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements; and part of the Hip Hop and the Unchurched generations; and a new worldview different from their fathers’ generations before them. J.G. McCann in his book “*How to R.E.A.C.H. Black Men for Christ*” mentioned that in “*Boys Into Men*,” Nancy Boyd Franklin and A. J. Franklin said:

Historically, Black men and boys have been at risk since they were brought here from the shores of Africa. During slavery, assertiveness was punished, their manhood was threatened at every turn, Black couples could not marry, and most Black families were forbidden to live under the same roof. As author Toni Morrison once said, It’s an absolute wonder that we’re even alive,” But despite making remarkable strides since slavery, many of us are still struggling daily with unemployment, lack of opportunities, poverty, homelessness, disease, AIDS, and other societal ills.⁷⁶

When it comes to poverty and AIDS as societal ills plaguing the Black community; in a questionnaire to African-American males not attending any church, about whether poverty is a big problem, little problem or not a problem for African-American males; 81 percent felt it was a big problem. In a *Washington Post* survey among Black men 77 percent felt poverty is a big problem for African-American males. When it came to HIV/AIDS and whether it is a big problem, little problem or not a problem; 89 percent of African-American males that do not attend any church that

⁷⁶McCann, *How to Reach Black Men for Christ*, 14-15.

completed the questionnaire felt it is a big problem for African-American males. In a survey conducted by *The Washington Post*, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University more than half of all black men said they fear they or a member of their family will get AIDS, nearly triple the percentage of white men.⁷⁷ Also, in a survey among Black men taken by *The Washington Post* it reported that 82 percent felt HIV/AIDS is a big problem for black men today.⁷⁸

The book of Judges covers disobedience and the disunion of the children of Israel after the death of Joshua. To show some social and cultural application to African-American males, and again I am paraphrasing from Judges 1:1 and 2:7-23. It was after the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement that a new and unfaithful generation emerged. This new generation knew not the Lord nor the work that Dr. King had done for the African-American community. There was chaos in the African-American community. The older generation had failed to teach the younger generation God's truth as God commanded Moses to teach his people in Deut. 6:1-9:

The lord your God told me to give you all these commandments which you are to obey in the land you will soon be entering, where you will live. The purpose of these laws is to cause you, your sons, and your grandsons to reverence the Lord your God by obeying all of his instructions as long as you live; if you do, you will have long, prosperous years ahead of you. Therefore, O Israel, listen closely to each command and be careful to obey it, so that all will go well with you, and so that you will have many children. If you obey these commands you will become a great nation in a glorious land flowing with milk and honey, even as the God of your fathers promised you.

O Israel, listen: Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone. You must love him with all your heart, soul, and might. And you must think constantly about these commandments I am giving you today. You must teach them to your children and talk about them when you are at home or out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning. Tie them on your finger, wear them on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your home (LBV)!

⁷⁷ Staff of the Washington Post, *Being a Black Man*, 23.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 322-323.

It was bad enough that they forgot Dr. King but to forget the Lord their God there was no excuse. The sons of African-Americans did evil in the sight of the Lord. They served other gods and forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of slavery. They followed after other cultures of the people around about them and bowed themselves to crime, violence, sexual immoralities, drugs and alcohol. Young African-American males gave in to these worldly cultures; Unchurched, Hip Hop, Busters, Street, Post-modern and the New Age. Young African-American males learned the ways of other cultures and worshiped their gods; materialism, rap music, music videos, popular black films, television programs, designer clothing, language, money, cars, and homes. If you don't defeat cultural materialism completely, then cultural materialism will eventually defeat you. The anger of the Lord was hot against the sons of African-Americans and the Lord delivered them into the hands of judges that incarcerated them.

As a result, African-American males receive longer prison terms for drug offenses than whites. The "three strikes" law was enacted in many states that give criminals convicted of three felonies mandatory sentences, sometimes as serious as life imprisonment. People convicted of felony drug offenses in certain states are prohibited from public housing, welfare benefits, and access to financial aid for education and, in some cases the right to vote. African American drug offenders have a 20 percent greater chance of being sentenced to prison than white drug offenders and even higher for Hispanics. The federal prison population has also reached record levels with high proportion of prisoners who are non-violent drug offenders, and increases in racial disparities in sentencing and the proportion of lower-level drug offenders. Demico Boothe in sharing his experience in prison writes:

The experience of being in prison also made me understand more about how slavery worked, and how miseducation was key in creating and sustaining it. It gave me a personal understanding of how Lynch's "plantation psychosis" worked so effectively among the slaves and aided in keeping them afraid, divided, and in bondage, because it is the same psychology used in prisons to keep inmates in line. I had always wondered how Blacks in America could have allowed themselves to be taken advantage of and treated in such ways for so long.⁷⁹

James Dixon, II in his book *"If God Is So Good Why Are Blacks Doing So Bad?"*

writes:

Only through the unique perspective of colored people who had been disenfranchised and marginalized, could one identify with the nomadic encounters of the Israelites in their post-slavery era. For truly the wilderness wandering for the Israelites was a period of instability and uncertainty. Blacks were motivated to maintain hope through their interpretation of the biblical account of the Joshua generation who eventually made it to the Promise Land. Black liberation theology had its roots firmly planted in the soil of this Old Testament saga. The fruit of which was a generation of liberating leaders who organized and mobilized the masses to participate in their own deliverance. Chief among these was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Black Liberation theology helped King and others to frame their message and their methods for leading black people to bear the responsibility to change their own predicament aided by God's power.⁸⁰

What we are witnessing today in this new Black culture is the diminishing influences of traditional purveyors from which black youth once derived its values and identity. Traditional community institutions like family, church and schools are no longer the main purveyors that young people look to for values and identity.⁸¹ In a questionnaire of African-American men that do not attend any church, only 30 percent felt that church is strongly influencing our young men, while 81 percent and 72 percent felt that sports and media/entertainment were strongly influencing our young men. Traditional black churches no longer have a strong influence over our young men. Traditional black

⁷⁹ Boothe, *Why Are So Many Black Men In Prison*, 104.

⁸⁰ James Dixon, II, *If God Is So Good, Why Are Blacks Doing So Bad* (Charlotte, N.C.: LifeBridge Books, 2007), 138-139.

⁸¹ Kitwana, *The Hip Generation*, 7.

churches are in direct competition with other gods for our young men's time. Traditional black churches are losing the culture war to sports, gangs, media and entertainment, rap music, crime and financial success in reaching young African-American males. 51 percent of African-American men that do not attend church said they left the church before the age of twenty and 49 percent said they were a member in a church before. 15 percent mentioned they stopped going to church because they were not saved. 21 percent also mentioned they stopped going to church because they lost interest in the church. Only 6 percent said that they stopped going to church because service was boring. When it came to leaving the church because of no program of interest only 4 percent said they left for that reason. Also, 6 percent mentioned they left the church because of conflicts with leadership.

Regarding the power of influence that the traditional black churches once had, Dixon said:

Historically, the church has been the single most influential organization in the progress of our race. It has been the bastion of human rights, the impetus for education, the engine for economic empowerment and the catalyst for political and social reform. It has provided our most prolific voices of anointed advocacy. It has also been an embracing family, an encouraging community and our most effective social services agency.

The black church has been our foremost source of information and inspiration. Being the only place for so long where blacks could gather and control the agenda, the church provided a forum for resourceful and relevant discussion. The ongoing conversations concerning the plight of the ex-slave community who were learning what it meant to be free and how to become and function as a freed people, took place in the black church.⁸²

Regarding the most influential figures in the history of the church, Dixon writes:

It is not coincidental that the most influential figures in black life have primarily been preachers and others tied to the church. We derived from the uniqueness of

⁸² Ibid., 139-140.

black liberation theology an understanding that there is sense to our struggle, meaning to our misery and purpose for our pain.⁸³

We also learned through this theology how God works through human agency—more explicitly through chosen and anointed leaders, to rescue, restore and relocate His people. This is why Negro leaders who placed themselves in harm's way for the sake of liberating and inspiring our people have always been compared to Moses and Joshua. Personalities like Harriet Tubman, Marcus Garvey, Sojourner Truth, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and others have been assigned these titles in respect to their significant roles. They lived sacrificially for our collective empowerment.⁸⁴

When it comes down to influences and why are we still here today and why we have not been totally destroyed given all that we have been through, Na'im Akbar said in "*Visions For Black Men*," if we want to survive, let's look at the images of those who did survive.⁸⁵ About Dr. King, Akbar writes:

Dr. King exemplified, better than anybody I know in modern times, the quality of "courage." That's what it takes to be an African-American man. Courage was not only necessary in the past, but it is necessary in these times also. Dr. King had the kind of courage necessary to let him face the mad beasts of Birmingham, the mad dogs of Selma, and the wild animals of Cicero. The characteristic that allowed him to do that was courage. He believed in what he was doing. His conviction was so compelling that he could stand up against the threat of death.

What was even more a proof of his own courage was that he defied the mainstream of his own "educated" class. Some Morehouse graduates were appalled that he was out in the street. Some Alphas were indignant. "You mean an Alpha man is out there causing all this disturbance? A Morehouse Alpha man on top of that!" History doesn't tell you this because Dr. King is portrayed "after the fact." When he started raising issues in the civil rights struggle, many middle-class "Negroes" were scared to death and begged him not to do it. He never had a successful campaign in Atlanta. He couldn't get enough of the comfortable status-quo, middle-class "Negroes" in Atlanta to get in the streets and begin to challenge the system. He had to go to Mississippi, Selma, and Montgomery. He had to get people who didn't have any stake in this system to walk in the streets and defy that system. But once it started looking good and being "cool" then came the doctors, the lawyers and all of the other preachers singing "We shall Overcome." They jumped in the front of the line and tried to take over the whole movement.

⁸³ Ibid., 139.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Na'im Akbar, *Vision For Black Men* (Tallahassee, Fl.: Mind Production & Associates, Inc., 1991), 65.

Many people at that time were upset and disturbed because Dr. King was going around “causing trouble.” They said, “We’ve got things good. Quiet that Negro down.” Before they knew it, the movement had caught strength.⁸⁶

Akbar also mentioned, like Jesus, Dr. King took the church to the streets. Jesus walked the streets and for the first time the African-American Christians were acting like Jesus. Dr. King was causing trouble in the streets just like Jesus. Akbar said “Dr. King got in the streets and began to bring the idea of the church into the street.”⁸⁷ Akbar writes something that is so profound; that Dr. King was driven by the impulsion of centuries of world leadership in the vanguard of humanity, driven by the same impulse that made the first man stand up by the base of Mount Kilimanjaro and say “I no longer want to be an animal. I want to be a man.” This was the same spirit that was running through his veins when he got to Montgomery that compelled Dr. King to say, “I can’t take it lying down anymore. I have got to stand up and lead humanity where it needs to be going.”⁸⁸ What made Dr. King a “man” was his courage to lay down his life to transform the world. Akbar believes that courage is one of the marks of being an African man.⁸⁹

The next man that Akbar mentioned that young African-American men should emulate for manhood is the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.⁹⁰ Akbar states that there is no other organization, no church, no temple, no mosque, that was taking “nobodies” and making them “somebodies.” Dr King talked about being somebody and Elijah Muhammad showed you how to make nobodies into somebodies. Elijah Muhammad began with those who nobody could help; chronic junkies, long-standing prostitutes, long-standing recidivistic criminals, the down-trodden, the down-and-outs who the

⁸⁶ Ibid., 66-67.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 68.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 68-69.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 69.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

psychologists, criminologists, sociologists, social workers, preachers, teachers, and nobody else could just pray over them.⁹¹ He helped transform their appearance and minds by cleaning them up; dressing them up; and changing their mindset. He helped them define themselves and have knowledge about their true identity. Akbar mentioned that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad was a man who turned Blacks away from white dependence and turned blacks into black independents. He demanded moral excellence and taught that you can't change the world until you have changed yourself. You can't drink and smoke everything in the world and expect other people to respect you. He taught that Blacks had to show some kind of moral excellence. He demanded moral excellence, self-respect, self definition and self-determination.⁹² These are excellent principles to follow to transform young African-American men in the African-American community.

Akbar also mentioned Booker T. Washington another African-American man that young African-American men can model themselves even though Akbar had some problems with him. Akbar liked that Booker T. believed in self-help. "Do something for yourself." Akbar also admired the fact that Booker T. understood that you've got to have resources to live in any system whether it is a capitalist or a socialist system. Akbar said that Booker T. had one of the best concepts for an aspect of our lives that we know. In his excellence, he was able to come up with a strategy for economic development that actually began to transform the rural black life in the South. Akbar also mentioned that Booker T.'s strategy for economic development began to serve as a vehicle that started to break blacks out of the slavery conditions and began to give blacks control of their own

⁹¹ Ibid., 70.

⁹² Ibid., 72.

environment in ways that blacks didn't have before. Akbar stated that Booker T. understood about institution building.⁹³

Paul Robeson was yet another man Akbar mentioned about African-American males should know about and model themselves after. Akbar writes:

Robeson could do the same thing on the football field that he did in law school. He did the same thing at law school that he did on the basketball court. He did the same thing in athletics in a multi-faceted way that he was able to do with diplomacy. He was as good an actor as he was eloquent in his political dialogue. He was as philosophically sound as he was musically talented. He was as creative as he was profound. They were all in one single package and he didn't compromise one ounce of it.⁹⁴

Akbar mentioned when they asked Robeson to act like an ex-slave he told them "no." If they asked him to scratch, and be undignified he said "no." If they wanted Roberson to mumble his words and not speak with articulation he would not. He understood that it would leave a profound reflection on his race. If they wanted him to look like those old butler-type and sort of fetch and scratch a little bit he said "I will not do it." They told him "well you won't act." He said, "I will not act then." They said, "We want you to go where we want you to go." He said, "I want to go where I want to go." They said, "We'll take away your passport." He said, "I still will not stop thinking what I think. I will not stop doing what I think I must do. You can curtail my mobility but you can't limit my mentality." He was determined to be true to the gifts that he had been given."⁹⁵

The lesson we should learn from Paul Robeson, according to Akbar, is we should not compromise or sacrifice our values and integrity no matter how much we can profit from the situation. Paul Robeson may not have achieved all that he wanted to do in the

⁹³ Ibid., 74.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 77.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

entertainment world, but he was a man of integrity and he was uncompromising in his integrity. Dr. King once said” If a man won’t die for something, then he is not fit to live.”⁹⁶

There is a sense of abandonment in the African American community when we focus on absentee fatherhood, high unemployment, educational failure, incarceration and recidivism, and the failure of our policies to recognize and encourage black men as husbands, fathers, sons and role models. When you have black fathers missing in the home, church and school, the three most important institutions where a child derives and develops core values, then you can imagine a child growing up feeling abandoned. How can a black father train up a son in the way he should go and when that son gets old he will not depart from it, if the father is not in the home to help train the son. 55 percent of African-American men that did not attend any church lived or grew up in a single parent home with only a mother. From this same group of men, 40 percent lived or grew up with both parents in the home. In yet another questionnaire for African-American males attending church, 28 percent grew up with their mother only and in a single parent home and 54 percent grew up in a home with both parents. A similar survey taken by *The Washington Post* revealed, 57 percent of black men lived with both parents and 31 percent lived with their mother only.⁹⁷ In this same questionnaire to African-American males attending church, 56 percent felt that the reason why their church had difficulty in recruiting and maintaining young African-American males ages 16-24, is because their fathers were not in the church. According to the U.S. Census, in 2005 more than two-

9. ⁹⁶ Coretta Scott King, *The Words of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1987),

⁹⁷ Staff of the Washington Post, *Being a Black Man*, 303.

thirds of black children lived in one-parent households, the majority headed by women.⁹⁸ President-Elect Barack Obama said in *"The State Of Black America 2007: Portrait of the Black Male"* that young black males in particular have been left so far behind that their well-being is too often measured not by the richness and meaning of their lives or their contributions to our economy and common lives, but rather by the costs they impose on others.⁹⁹ This sense of abandonment is being felt in homes, schools, churches, employment and relationships. In a shared vision among Black fathers from the *"African American Fathers' Project,"* co-sponsored by the Morehouse Research Institute and the Institute for American Values, they agreed that there are profound spiritual dimensions to the importance of fathers as equal partners with mothers in the raising of children, and that in order to make the way for nurturing relationships between fathers and their children, much healing must be done between fathers and mothers, men and women.¹⁰⁰ This project is calling upon African American fathers, Black churches, African-American institutional and organizational leaders, and government officials to help end the absentee father crisis that is plaguing the African American community:

We call upon all African American fathers who are not actively and lovingly involved in their children's lives, to turn their hearts toward their little ones, and to work toward healing their relationships with their children and with the mothers of their children.

We call upon the Black church to make the healing and restoration of African American families a major focus of its work, and to take a leadership role in reuniting fathers and children, and mothers and fathers—wherever possible, through marriage.

⁹⁸ The National Urban League, *The State Of Black America 2007: Portrait of the Black Male* (Silver Springs, MD: Beckham Publications Groups, Inc., 2007), 14

⁹⁹ Ibid., 10.

¹⁰⁰ The Morehouse Research Institute and Institute for American Values, *Turning the Corner on Fathers Absence In Black America: A Statement from the Morehouse Conference on African American Fathers* (New York, NY: Institute for American Values, 1999), 5.

We call upon the leaders of all African American civil rights, fraternal, professional, philanthropic, social, and civil organizations to put the issue of re-uniting fathers with their children at the very top of their agendas at least the next decade, and to forge creative partnerships with the many African American leaders now at the forefront of the fatherhood movement.

We call upon African American leaders to bring to this movement the same energy and dedication, the same passion and fearlessness, and the same creativity and courage that was summoned to wage the struggle for basic civil rights. And we call upon our national, state, and municipal leaders to put the full weight of government resources at all levels, for at least the next decade, behind partnerships designed to re-unite fathers with their children and to strengthen families.¹⁰¹

In a Newsweek article dated August 30, 1993, written by Michele Ingrassia entitled "*Endangered Family*" it was reported that for blacks, the institution of marriage has been devastated in the last generation: 2 out of 3 first births to black women under 35 were out of wedlock. In 1960, the number was 2 out of 5. A black child born then only had a 1-in-5 chance of growing up with two parents until the age of 16, according to University of Wisconsin demographer Larry L. Bumpass.¹⁰² What we are witnessing today in the African American community are the results of children growing up in single-parent homes. It was reported that the cause of the decrease in black marriages and the increase in babies born to black women out of wedlock was the economic dislocations that began in the 70s, when the nation shifted from an industrial to a service base, and the loss of manufacturing jobs that was particularly devastating to black men.¹⁰³

Did you know that today more than half of the nation's 5.6 million black boys live in fatherless households, in which 40 percent are impoverished?¹⁰⁴ Also, did you know that of all black babies born in 1996 approximately 70 percent were born to unmarried

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 6.

¹⁰² Michele Ingrassia, "*Endangered Family*" Newsweek, August 30, 1993, 17.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 18.

¹⁰⁴ The National Urban League, *The State Of Black America 2007*, 209.

mothers?¹⁰⁵ After years of careful study and analysis Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur concluded that the evidence is quite clear; children that grow up in a household with only one biological parent are worse off, on average, than children who grow up in a household with both of their biological parents, regardless of the parents' race or educational background, regardless of whether the parents are married when the child is born, and regardless of whether the resident parent remarries.¹⁰⁶ Marc H. Morial, President and Chief Executive Officer National Urban League said "there's no doubt that children raised in one-parent households are more likely to live in poverty, which is much more likely to perpetuate the cycle of underachievement and drastically diminished expectations. The absence of the black man in the black family will only lead to greater poverty for our community as a whole and this helps exacerbate the disparities already existing between minorities and whites in the United States."¹⁰⁷ In addition, boys raised in single parent homes are twice as likely (and boys raised in stepfamilies three times as likely) to commit a crime leading to incarceration.¹⁰⁸ We can no longer afford to underestimate the father-child bond and the struggles that Black women are having raising children without fathers in the homes. There seems to be a direct correlation between an increase in babies born to Black women in this country out of wedlock and an increase in single parents to the increased incarceration rate of African-American males.

¹⁰⁵ The Morehouse Research Institute and Institute for American Values, *Turning The Corner On Fathers Absence In Black America*, 5.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 8.

¹⁰⁷ The National Urban League, *The State Of Black America 2007*, 15.

¹⁰⁸ The Morehouse Research Institute and Institute for American Values, *Turning the Corner on Fathers Absence In Black America*, 8.

According to the African American Fathers Project, the problem of father absence in the African American community is tied to spiritual brokenness which is linked to economic, political, cultural, and social patterns that are partly rooted in slavery and continuing adversities.¹⁰⁹ It was written:

The Institution of slavery stripped African American fatherhood of much of its sacred character. Continuing racism, economic discrimination, and public and private sector policies that have divided families have adversely affected relationships between Black men and Black women. These painful influences have adversely affected the raising of Black children. They have harmed marriages and thwarted the formation of families. It is time now to take the time to recover, as fully as possible, what has been lost.¹¹⁰

The crisis of father absence poses a profound challenge to the Black church. The church's challenge is this most vital mission of helping the African American community to heal through ministries of forgiveness and reconciliation.¹¹¹

Another crisis the African American community is facing is the civic crisis of "disconnected" youth and young adults. According to the Community Service Society of New York, in New York City there are over 163,000 young people ages 16-24 that are neither in school nor in the labor force.¹¹² In New York, you cannot get a high school diploma if you are over 21. Disconnected youth are overwhelmingly people of color. Nearly two-thirds of the disconnected are ages 20 to 24, with one-third still in their teens.¹¹³ Disconnected youth also live in the same neighborhoods where schools are weak and jobs are scarce, and where many young people need a second chance to succeed. In some neighborhoods, they make up over 20 percent of all people ages 16 to 24.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 18.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Lazar Treschan and Christine Molnar *Out Of Focus: A Snapshot of Public Funding to Reconnect Youth to Education and Employment* (New York, NY: Community Service Society, 2008), 1.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 2.

In a N.Y. Times article titled “*Dire Problem for Young Black Men, Several New Academic Studies Warn*,” dated March 20, 2006 by Michael H. Cottman, it was reported that:

The share of young black men without jobs has climbed relentlessly, with only a slight pause during the economic peak of the late 1990’s. In 2000, 65 percent of black male high school dropouts in their 20s were jobless—that is, unable to find work, not seeking it or incarcerated. By 2004, the share had grown to 72 percent, compared with 34 percent of white and 19 percent of Hispanics dropouts. Even when high school graduates were included, half of black men in their 20’s were jobless in 2004, up from 46 percent in 2000.

Incarceration rates climbed in the 1990’s and reached historic highs in the past few years. In 1995, 16 percent of black men in their 20’s who did not attend college were incarcerated. By their mid-30’s, 6 in 10 black men who had dropped out of school had spent time in prison.

In the inner cities, more than half of all black men do not finish high school.¹¹⁵

This shows that things are not getting better for young African-American men but are getting worse. In a questionnaire to African-American males that do not attend any church, 49 percent felt things are getting worse for them while 36 percent felt things are getting better for them. Another 11 percent felt things are staying about the same. In a questionnaire to African-American males that attend church, 62 percent felt things are getting worse for them while 18 percent felt that things are getting better for them and another 14 percent felt things are staying about the same. A similar survey taken by *The Washington Post*, reported 29 percent of black men felt that things are getting better for black men while 34 percent felt things are getting worse and 36 percent felt things are staying about the same.¹¹⁶ In a questionnaire to African-American males that do not attend any church 51 percent felt it is a good time to be an African-American male in

¹¹⁵ Michael H. Cottman, *Dire Problems for Young Black men, Several New Academic Studies Warn*, *New York Times*, 20 March 2006, National, A1 and A18.

¹¹⁶ Staff of the Washington Post, *Being a Black Man*, 317.

America, while 21 percent felt it is a bad time to be an African-American male. Yet another questionnaire to African-American males that attend church, 48 percent felt it is a good time to be an African-American male in America, while 22 percent felt it was a bad time to be an African-American male. In a *Washington Post*'s survey 60 percent of black men felt it is a good time to be a black man in America while 28 percent felt it was a bad time to be a black man in America.¹¹⁷

In order to increase the presence and participation of young African-American males in church, traditional black churches will need to take the church outside of its four walls. What are young African-American males doing on Sunday mornings during worship hours? Our men are in the parks playing basketball, softball and football. They are in the gyms working out. They are at home watching the sports channels, washing the car or cutting the grass. They are also in the jails. In attempting to learn how to reach African-American males that do not attend any church, I went out to four local parks during the summer months while church was in session during Sunday morning worship hours. My observations were that there were more African-American men in these parks than in most churches. I also discovered that several men in these parks were related to members in those nearby churches. There were husbands and sons of women who are members of nearby churches.

Today, there are more established prison ministries by traditional black churches than there are street and sports ministries. Why do we have to wait until young black men are incarcerated before we begin to minister and reach out to them? We need more outreach ministries that will keep our young men, out of prison, off drugs and alcohol, and from committing crimes. We need more outreach ministries that will keep young

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 318.

men from engaging in sex before marriage. My questionnaire to men that do not attend any church, 68 percent felt African-American males generally put too much emphasis on sex. In a questionnaire to African-American males that attend church, 74 percent felt African-American males generally put too much emphasis on sex. In a similar *Washington Post* Survey, 60 percent of black men felt black men generally put too much emphasis on sex.¹¹⁸ We need more outreach ministries that will teach young men crime prevention. 64 percent of African-American males that do not attend any church felt crime is strongly influencing our young men and 93 percent felt becoming involved in crime is a big problem for African-American males in America. 82 percent of African-American males that attend church felt becoming involved in crime is a big problem for African-American males in America. In the *Washington Post* survey, 88 percent of black men felt becoming involved in a crime is a big problem for black men.¹¹⁹ We need more prevention ministries that will help educate young men on the pitfalls of selling and using drugs. 89 percent of African-American males that do not attend any church felt drugs and alcohol are big problems for African-American males today. Also, 84% of African-American males that attend church felt drugs and alcohol are big problems for African-American males. In *The Washington Post* survey, 87 percent of black men felt drugs and alcohol abuse are big problems for them.¹²⁰ We need more sports ministries that will compete for young men time that are attracted to sports. 66 percent of African-American males that do not attend any church felt African-American males generally put too much emphasis on sports and 81 percent felt sports are strongly influencing our young men today. 66 percent of African-American males that attend church felt African-American

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 318-319.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 323.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

males put too much emphasis on sports and 58 percent felt sports are strongly influencing our young men today. In *The Washington Post* survey 54 percent of black men felt black men generally put too much emphasis on sports. When it comes to sports only 3 out of every 100 high school basketball players will play college basketball; 8 out of every 100,000 will be drafted into the NBA/WNBA; 6 out of every 100 high school football players will play college football; and 25 out of every 100,000 will be drafted into the NFL.¹²¹

In my interview with Reverend Joe Brown, Pastor of The Faith Baptist Cathedral in Hempstead, New York; Pastor Brown said “sports are killing the church.” Pastor Brown also mentioned that sports lead to church dropouts among our young men.

James Dixon, II writes:

Because a part of our culturally inbred psyche is to hope for, look forward to, some even pray for star athletes to come from their loins. Black parents peek with excitement at any sign which suggests their boys may have celebrity sports potential. Sadly we often fail to look for, notice or expect academic scholarship.

Of course, black kids out-perform others in areas outside the classroom and predominantly black school sports teams win championships—but fail to win awards for academic achievement.¹²²

In order to reach young African-American males today we are witnessing more churches establishing sports ministries. What football, basketball, and baseball coaches are doing better than our churches are recruiting and giving our young men a chance to lead and a position on the team. They provide training for our young men to improve and get better in order to have a chance to achieve greatness. What does the military do to get young men in the military that churches are not doing? The military actively goes out and

¹²¹ *Estimated Probability of Competing in Athletics Beyond the High School Interscholastic*, http://www.ncaa.org/research/prob_of_competing (November 4, 2008).

¹²² James Dixon, II, *If God Is So Good*, 45.

recruits young men to enlist in the military (“Uncle Sam Wants You”). The military trains and prepares young men to be ready for war. What are churches doing to actively recruit and train young men for ministry (lost efforts)? Does your church have an active recruiting and training ministry designed to reach young men for Christ like sports teams and the military for their purpose and mission? I find many churches are lacking in recruiting and training young men for ministry and kingdom building (lost Christian Education).

In a questionnaire asking African-American males that attend church what ministries in their church were effective in reaching African-American males of all ages; 44 percent felt the music ministry, 72 percent thought the men’s ministry, 28 percent pointed to the mentoring ministry, 30 percent chose the outreach ministry, 14 percent responded the media ministry and 22 percent felt the athletic ministry. When asked of these same men, what do you feel are the reasons why your church has difficulty in recruiting and maintaining African-American males ages 16-24; 56 percent said there are no programs of interest (lost Christian education), 34 percent thought the dress code, 34 percent chose peer pressure, for 28 percent it was adult dominance, 18 percent pointed to women dominance, 22 percent felt because of Sunday sports and 56 percent felt because their fathers are not in church.

When queried about what the church is doing in terms of developing outreach ministries for African-American males ages 16-24; 36 percent said evangelism revivals, 38 percent replied social picnic ministries, for 26 percent it was fashion and talent shows, 64 percent said educational bible studies, for 44 percent it was educational vacation bible study and 20 percent said community tutoring programs and 12 percent said job training

and youth ministries. I found very few of these ministries involve going outside the church. Almost no ministries require members to go outside and reach young men for Christ (lost effort).

When asking this same group of men why do you think African-American males ages 16-24 leave the church, 76 percent felt they lost interest in the church, for 64 percent it was because of no program of interest, 52 percent responded because of their involvement in gangs, 50 percent answered because they were not saved, 48 percent said because of generational conflict, for 46 percent it was because of no meaningful role, and 44 percent felt because of sports. All of this produces a lose of faith.

We have to remember that Jesus went outside the four walls. When Jesus actively recruited the twelve disciples it took place outside the synagogues. Jesus said in Matt. 4:19 "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." This is Jesus actively recruiting Peter and Andrew by the Sea of Galilee. Matthew 4:21, Jesus saw James and John on a ship and recruited them. After recruiting the twelve, Jesus went up unto a mountain and taught them. Most of our church ministries are built around teaching but not on going out daily and recruiting men. One problem that I had in trying to reach young African-American males was getting men to leave the church to go out and recruit (evangelize) young men for Christ. Currently, there are about 200 African-American males at my church and 180 listed on the church roll. Of the 180 listed, only 8 or 4 percent are between the ages of 16-24. My church only has 1.3 percent of the 13,153 (44 percent) African-American males living in the Village of Hempstead attending services. That percentage is even lower when we consider African-American males between the ages

16-24. For Long Island, 200 men attending an African-American church is considered a large men's ministry no matter what the church size is.

My interview with Rev. Dr. J. G. McCann, Sr, Pastor of the St. Luke Baptist Church in Harlem, New York began with one direct question: "How do we reach young African-American men for Christ today?" Dr. McCann gave me three key points in reaching our young men.

The church must first be willing to relocate. The church must be willing to move from the pulpits to where they are. Dr. McCann said, "if it means that we have to go sit down at McDonalds then we have to do that. If it means that we have to go and have church in the parks then we have to do that." Move from inside the four walls and go out into the streets and into the parks. Our young men are often not interested in coming to the church building the traditional way. We must be willing to take the church outside just as Jesus met the woman at the well. The church can no longer wait until our young men decide when the time to come in is right, or when they can get themselves together. Just like Peter and John said to the lame man in Act 3 "look on us," likewise we must be the Peters and Johns in the community that our young men "can look on." We must be the role models; preachers and teachers that young men want to pattern themselves after. When I asked Dr. McCann, where are the Peters and Johns in our community today? He responded by saying "you are looking at one." He then asked me "how many of our brothers can say "look on me?" You have to be able to say "look on me." There are many brothers that can't say "look on me" because of the junk in their trunk. How many can say "look on me;" look at my education; look at how far the Lord has brought me; from the streets; from the hood; now I am polished; now I am blessed all because I am in

Christ and not because of my own ingenuity; but because I have put my trust and faith in Jesus Christ. You are looking at a modern day Peter and John who is able to go back to the “Boogey Down Bronx” right on Prospect Avenue where I was raised and say “look on me.” The same God that has pulled me out of these streets can do the same for you.”

According to McCann, secondly, we must reconcile some of our ideologies and issues because a lot of the things black men are saying about the church are true and sometimes perception is reality. We have to tear down those stereo-types of the black church and its preacher. The church has a lot of reconciliation to do within the community. What our young men are complaining about that is wrong with our churches has a lot of validity. Reconciliation must precede healing. We must correct what is wrong with the inside before we can preach to the outside. What’s working on the inside should be working on the outside. If things are not working on the inside then how can we expect it to work on the outside? If the body is sick on the inside then you can expect it to affect the body on the outside. The church must also repent for its failure to bring about restoration.

Thirdly, there must be a redistribution of power within the church. We must empower young men for ministry. McCann said, “If our young men come to church we need to empower them to be somebody. The church must utilize their street wisdom for ministry. We must empower our young men in a positive way.” If the church fails to empower our young men we will never reach them totally for Christ. Like President-Elect Barack Obama stated “there first must be a redistribution of wealth within this country in order to fix what is wrong.” McCann is saying “there must be a redistribution of power within the church.” Our young men are looking to be empowered. Jesus said in John

14:18, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." In other words, Jesus was saying to the disciples I will not leave you helpless but God will empower you to do things through My Spirit. Jesus also said "But the Comforter; which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26)." In Acts 1:8 it teaches us that the Holy Ghost is "Power;" "But you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

In addition, Dr. McCann mentioned that we need to establish more rites to passage ministries where we stick with our young brothers and mentor them as opposed to BET and these young Hip Hoppers mentoring them. The reason that our young men are more loyal and attracted to hip hoppers and rappers is because they are the ones that are talking directly to them. Young men turn on the TV to BET and there is no disconnect with the Hip Hoppers. Dr. McCann said "the average father spends only 32 seconds of undivided attention with a child, which is a real problem in our community."

I also mentioned to Dr. McCain a fourth "R." The church must be more radical in its message. Our message is not radical enough for our young men today and the message coming from the pulpits is not relevance. Our young people are hearing a more radical message from the hip hoppers. Dr. McCann responded by saying "that is a profound statement because we are dealing with a Hip Hop culture that is a "in your face culture" today. They tell you today right to your face what they feel. It is what they call "keeping it real." We have to come the same way in order to reach them. We have to come straight by keeping it real. Just like Paul said to Peter about abandoning the Cross and resorting to the Law and preaching another Gospel; "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I

withstood him to the face, because he was to be blame (Gal. 2:11).” Paul told Peter to his face that he was wrong. Paul was “keeping it real.”

What I mean by a more radical message is that the message coming from the church and clergy must be more relevant to the political and social needs and issues in the African-American community. The message must be relevant (not lost) to what’s going on today whether it be socially, politically, psychologically, or economically conveyed. C. Eric Lincoln writes in order to attract college-educated young adults the church and pastor have to be more relevant to the political and social issues in the larger community (social teachings). Whether these young professionals will join and support the historic black churches, as their parents did, may depend upon how the clergy and the churches respond to these challenges (efforts) and whether the clergy can accommodate and use their professional skills in ministry of the church without feeling threatened by them (faith). If creative responses are lacking and these young adults continue to feel alienated then they will leave their mother’s houses and black churches behind.¹²³

¹²³ Lincoln and. Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 344.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT ARE OUR BIBLICAL RESPONSIBILITIES THROUGH SCRIPTURE IN REACHING AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES?

And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness (Exodus 5:1).

RESCUE, RECLAIM (RESTORE), AND RELOCATE

Armed with the McCann ideas of relocation, reconciliation, redistribution and borrowing from Rev. James Dixon, II, and along with my fourth “R” of radicalization, I returned to the Word for the Biblical perspective.

The responsibilities of reaching African-American males are clear from a Biblical and Christological perspective: to **Rescue, Reclaim (Restore) and Relocate** African-American males back into the presence of God. As servants of God we must be willing to go down to the rough spots in our community to rescue, reclaim and relocate our young men from where they are and to bring them back into the presence of God. This is a Christian recruitment plan. Someone has to rescue our young men from the destructive lifestyle and the moral decline that we are witnessing today, and to restore them back to an intimate relationship with God. In the Book of Exodus, Moses was sent by God to tell Pharaoh to “Let My People go.” God sent Moses on a rescue mission to reclaim the Children of Israel as God’s people and to relocate the Children of Israel out of Egypt into the Wilderness and eventually into the Promise Land. God rescued them in Egypt, restored them in the wilderness and relocated them to the Promise Land, their final

destination. As Christians and servants of God we are to rescue, restore and relocate the people back to God. The Scriptures teach us "For God sent not God's Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17). Jesus Christ came into the world to rescue, to reclaim (restore) and to relocate us back into the presence of God so that we may be full participants and partakers in the Kingdom of God. Someone must be ready to go down into the fiery furnace and rescue these young African-American men like the Son of God did for the three Hebrew boys; Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego (Daniel 3:25). Abraham rescued Lot out of the hands of the enemy and reclaimed and relocated Lot back into the presence of God. Gideon was also sent by God to rescue the Children of Israel out of the hands of the enemy, the "Midianites." Gideon was faced with overwhelming odds in going up against the Medianites. Gideon had to face 135,000 Medianites with 32,000 men only to see his army reduced to 300 faithful men. Gideon was willing to fight when faced with overwhelming odds to rescue, to reclaim and relocate the Children of God. As servants of God our faith must be so strong that we are willing to face overwhelming odds to get the victory. We have to see as God sees, hear as God hears, and go where God wants us to go in order to rescue, reclaim and relocate our young men back into the presence of God. David was willing to go up against the giant Goliath to keep the Children of Israel from falling into the hands of the enemy and becoming servants of the Philistine. God rescues, restores and relocates what belongs to God. Ministry is a rescue, restoration and relocation mission. The church must relocate in order to rescue and restore.

We must be willing to rescue African-American males from the moral decline in family and community; from the drug dealers and gang leaders, and from participating in

crime. We also must be willing to reclaim African-American men from the streets. Once we have reclaimed them from the streets, drug dealers and gangs we can relocate them back into the presence of God. We also must rescue and reclaim them from high unemployment, failing education systems, high incarceration rates and an unfair justice system. If our Christian recruitment plan fails, the results will be catastrophic. The seven plagues outlined next will continue.

SEVEN PLAGUES EFFECTING AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES

The hard reality today in reaching African-American males of all ages is convincing them that their life will and can change once they accept Christ. There is a theology of suspicion among African-American males not attending any church. They are suspicious of churches, preachers, law enforcement, the justice system, school systems, and the government (lost social teachings). I am Paraphrasing from Job 14:1, "A Black man born of a woman is a few days and full of trouble." How can African-American men move forward in this country as a people when some of the same issues that were plaguing African-Americans more than 100 years ago still exist today. The seven plagues that are killing the African-American males today are: unemployment, homicide, drugs and alcohol, gang violence, a lack of quality education, absentee fathers and incarceration. God told Moses in Exodus 14:15 to tell the children of Israel to "go forward." How did the children of Israel put the past behind them in order to go forward after 400 years of slavery? How can African-Americans go forward after years of slavery in America? How can African-Americans go forward when 68 percent of babies born to black women in this country are born out of wedlock? Again, how can African-American go forward when 41 percent of special education children are African-Americans and 85

percent of them are males? Something is wrong. Try going forward when 73 percent of Black males between the ages of 18 and 35 are either in prison, on probation or on parole. Again, try going forward when 85 percent of African-American male inmates did not attend church and 95 percent of the men in prison can't read beyond the sixth-grade reading level, never graduated from high school, were never given a course in African History, were on the corner throughout the night and did not attend high school. Again something is wrong. Can African-American males go forward when homicide is the leading killer of black men, and crime is considered the major problem in the African-American community? Recent studies indicate that the major problems plaguing the African-American community are crime, drugs, teen pregnancy, and single parenting. Are we seeing a new Pharaoh in the African-American community today? Does today's Pharaoh have a problem with African-American males because we are witnessing more and more young African-American men going up the river (prison)? In Exodus 1:15, a new Pharaoh told the midwives "when you do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, if it be a son, then ye shall kill him, but if it is a daughter then she shall live." Jawanza Kunjufu in *"The Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys"* said, "what makes the conspiracy more complex are those people who do not plot together to destroy Black boys, but, through their indifference, perpetuate it. This passive group of conspirators consists of parents, educators, and white liberals who deny being racists, but through their silence allow Institutional racism to continue."¹²⁴ No social teaching, no message, no efforts, no faith, and no Christian Education. African-Americans must go forward with better school systems, with better jobs, and with better health care. Pharaoh never had a

¹²⁴ Jawanza Kunjufu, *Countering The Conspiracy To Destroy Black Boys*, (Chicago: African American Images, 1985), 1.

problem with the Hebrew women, but he had a problem with the Hebrew men. Are we seeing the same thing today, the new leadership in this country having problems with African-American males? Unemployment, crime and violence, drugs and alcohol are killing young African-American men and nothing major is on the horizon to change it. These societal ills will continue to plague the African-American males until something is done about them.

Today, young African-American men are faced with different challenges than previous generations. Peer pressure has changed. The way children are taught in school has changed. Parenting has also changed. The way they are taught at home has changed. It's a different day than the times when our parents were coming up. The world is more complicated and sophisticated. We are living in the technology age; the computer, the internet, the cell phone, cable, wireless, digital and GPS systems. The cost of living is up; prices of homes have decreased and gas has increased. The stock market has changed. The market is up one day and down the next day. We are seeing bank failures and thousands of homes being foreclosed while our young men are faced with the challenges of masculinity, accountability and attitude adjustment.

When dealing with the challenge of masculinity young African-American men are getting mixed messages about what a real man should be. Should a man be macho or milquetoast or somewhere in between? Jesus was very divine and very human. Jesus was tough, tender and powerful. In his divine nature, Jesus was not born of flesh and blood, but he was born of the Spirit. Matthew 1:22 says, "they will call him Immanuel, meaning "God with us." Jesus was also very human.

T.E.A.C.H.

Christ commanded us to go and teach all nations, which mean all people, and it includes all men, it also includes African-American males. Go and teach all nations the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To go and teach all men to go and reach all through the preaching of the Gospel and the proclaiming Jesus Christ. Christ commanded us to “love the Lord God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and to love they neighbor as thyself” (Matt. 22:37-40). When we are in Christ we must teach all men to live for Christ. An acronym for biblical teaching to reach African-American males is **T.E.A.C.H.**, train, educate, apply, commit, and honor. Train up a child in the way the Bible teaches you; “**train** up a child in the way he should go: when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6). The Bible says in 1 Cor. 13:11, “when I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things.” Brothers it is time to put away childish things and act like a man.

We must **educate** our sons in accordance with the Scriptures and teach them the commandments that they may fear the Lord our God. “And you must think constantly about these commandments I am giving you today. You must teach them to your children and talk about them when you are at home or out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning. Tie them on your finger, wear them on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your home” (Deut.6:6-8, LBV). We must teach our sons to **apply** God’s word to their daily lives. “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right” (2 Tim. 3:16 LBV). To follow Christ is to **commit** to Christ. You

must choose who you will serve. For me and my house will serve the Lord our God.

Joshua told the children of Israel:

Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerely and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord, and if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord (Jos. 24:14-15).

We must teach our sons to **honor** the Lord our God and also to honor their parents.

Exodus 20:8-12 teaches us to "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall thou labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God: in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates. For in six days, the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it. Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God gives you." T.E.A.C.H. is the Christian message inherent in any recruitment plan. Go ye therefore and teach all nations.

RELOCATE THE CHURCH

The major thrust of my theology in reaching African-American males 16-24 in order to increase their presence and participation in church was to relocate the church outside the four walls of the building into the streets and parks to meet young men where they are and lead them to Christ. Saul (Apostle Paul) met Christ on the journey and road to Damascus, not in the synagogues listening to sermons from the high priest. Jesus went into the streets and the community to reach and recruit his disciples to build his church; not in the synagogues and temples; not to the leadership of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

God is too big for man to box God in. It is my belief that you don't have to come to church to meet God, but as Christians, we go to church to worship God and to fellowship with one another. God is everywhere; therefore God can show up anywhere and anytime. To limit God to one location would be to take away God's characteristic of being omnipresence. God is on the streets and in the parks on Sunday mornings at 11:00 am as well as in the church building. God is too big to get over and too wide to get around. In Mark 16:15 Jesus' Great Commission to his disciples was to go into the entire world and proclaim the Gospel. Jesus Great Commission is also found in Matthew 28:19-20. Luke 12:23, we are commissioned to go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that God's house may be filled. As servants of God we are to go out into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind (Luke 14:21).

Jesus began his ministry by saying to two brothers who were fishermen "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their business and followed Christ. If you love God with all your heart, soul, and mind then you will leave everything to follow Christ. To fill God's house with men we must become fishers of men. How many men that are following Christ today can get other men to put down their nets and follow Christ? When others see your life in Christ does it make others want to live their life for Christ? God will not be satisfied until the Gospel is preached to all. The recruitment plan begins with relocation.

I AM THE WAY TO THE FATHER

The Way is the direction to God, the Truth is God is real and the Life is the presence of God that God truly exists. As Christians, it is our responsibility to show our sons the way and help them rediscover their true identity and the land of their fathers. In Genesis 48, when Joseph had learned that his father Jacob was sick, Joseph took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him to visit his father. Joseph wanted his sons to know and realize that even though they were born in Egypt, they still were not Egyptians, but rather they were of the house of Jacob, an Israelite. Joseph wanted his sons to know his father. Like Jesus is the Way to the Father; Joseph was the way to his father for his sons. Joseph showed his sons the way to his father. Such is a portrayal of Believers born in this present world, but nevertheless not of this world, but rather of the world to come¹²⁵ In Genesis 22:1-8, Abraham had to take Isaac his son and offer him up to God. Abraham showed his son the way to the Provider. Although, African-American men are born in America their roots are in Africa. Although, the first generation of African-American were enslaved they still were not slaves. The great black theologian Howard Thurman once said about the plantation preacher always preaching the same message to his grandmother and other enslaved blacks; the essence was to say "Look at you. Look at you. You are not slaves. You are God's children and nothing else really matters."¹²⁶ We all are God's children. Stokely Carmichael said it plainly when he said:

No man can give anybody freedom. A man is born free. You may enslave a man after he is born free. And that is in fact what this country does. It enslaves black people after they're born. So that the only act that white people can do is to stop

¹²⁵ Jimmy Swaggart, *The Expositor's Study Bible: King James Version* (Jimmy Swaggart Ministries: Baton Rouge, La., 2005), 95.

¹²⁶ Catherine Ellis and Stephen Drury Smith, *Say It Plain: A Century of Great African American Speeches* (The New Press: New York, 2005), 40.

denying black people their freedom. That is, they must stop denying freedom. They never give it to anyone.¹²⁷

Like Joseph, we should never stop dreaming and reaching. In Roman 12:1-2, the Bible teaches us not to be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. How can any young man rediscover who they are without a father to show them the way and share with them their true identity? Who will show abandoned sons the way to God? The reason the prodigal son was able to return back to his father was because he had a previous relationship with the father. The Bible teaches us that no man comes to God, except through the Son, Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Fathers are to offer their sons up to God and lead their sons to Christ. We must reconcile our youth back to God and away from the "World."

FREEDOM OF INTERPRETATION

Historically, man has always interpreted the Bible to support or to justify ones own position and actions within a particular community. The social location of the interpreter helps create the meaning of biblical texts. How one uses and interprets Biblical text is shaped by ones own social location. The reader as interpreter assumed that the world that he or she lives in is universal and should be accepted by everyone. However this is a limited perspective in interpreting Scripture. For example, Frederick C. Tiffany and Sharon H Ringe mentioned that "plantation owners in the southern United States read and interpreted the Bible (or had the Bible read and interpreted to them and to those persons they held as slaves) to convey the message that slaves must obey their masters, and to enforce the notion of the masters' own racial superiority. In these hands

¹²⁷ Ibid., 58.

the Bible functioned to construct and reinforce a particular social order that encompassed plantation owners and their families, those employed or supported by the owners, and those enslaved by the owners.”¹²⁸ African slaves however, used the freedom of interpretation of Biblical text by articulating their own social experiences in song, prayers, and sermons, to denounce social injustice and a call for social justice for enslaved people.

James Hurt writes, “at the core of the theology of the Black church in the United States has been the belief that God, in the creation of the human family, the revelation of himself in Jesus of Nazareth and in the inspired words of Scripture, is against oppression and dehumanization and in favor of the freedom, justice and highest development of the gifts and abilities with which each human being is endowed.”¹²⁹ He goes on to say, the real theology of the Black Church has been and continues to be about God’s concern for human equality and liberation, and our responsibility to “do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God,” (Micah 6:8).¹³⁰ As African-Americans, we have always looked to God to deliver us out of the hands of them that oppress us. We believe that God has no respect of persons.

¹²⁸Frederick C. Tiffany and Sharon H. Hinge, *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 31.

¹²⁹James E. Hurt, Jr, *National Assembly of Black Church Organization: Lifting As We Climb* (New Orleans: Nor-Way Print Corp, 1984), 2-3.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, 3.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODS

Hypothesis

It is my contention that there is a combination of factors that are apparently keeping traditional black churches, like Antioch from reaching and retaining African-American males ages 16-24 in church. As a distant observer, it became obvious to me that churches, in general, have not been successful in recruiting African American males ages 16-24 because there has been a lack of proper responses to their social, political, economic, psychological, and spiritual needs. Upon objectively observing these traditional black churches, and weighing my own experiences as an African American male, I am inclined to hypothesize that the following factors have contributed to the disappearance of these young men from church, and the church's inability to reach them:

- 1] Many pastors of traditional black churches have not made it a priority to recruit and retain young African-American males. I contend that many traditional black churches have pastors that have not made a concerted effort to reach out to these young men (Lost Effort).
- 2] There is a lack of male parental leadership. Many young African-American males are not in church because their fathers are or were not in church. Many of them come from single parent homes headed by a female. Many African-American males are seeking male mentoring (lost character and no social teaching).

3] Many young African-American males are unemployed and if the church can't help them get a job they have no need for the church. Our young men need jobs (lost character and no social teaching).

4] Also, many traditional black churches have not implemented programs or ministries that draw and maintain the interest of young men to return to church. Too few programs of interest, such as community outreach, job training, and survival skills (lost efforts).

5] Too much emphasis on sports. Many African-American males and their parents place too much emphasis on sports which keep them out of church on Sunday. Sports on Sunday contribute to church dropouts (Character and social teaching).

6] Too much emphasis on sex. Many African-American males place too much emphasis on sex which causes them to stray away from church. Quite often sex before marriage leads to teen pregnancy and responsibilities for which our young men are not prepared (character and social teaching).

7] Negative societal influences outside the church. Many African-American males do not come to church because of peer pressure from friends. It is "not cool" to go to church. Many young men select and accept negative role models, fostered by society that keeps them from the church (character and social teaching).

8] No opportunities to lead. Many young African-American males do not come to church because little or no time is given to them to lead in traditional black churches (lost faith).

9] Many churches are dominated by women. Many young African-American males do not come to church because most churches are majority women. In many cases, men like to be where there are other men. If men are going to come to church; other men must be present (lost effort).

10] Irrelevant preaching and teaching. Many sermons are not especially relevant to the social and economic conditions of today's African-American males' lives (lost message).

11] Not enough emphasis is placed on education. Many African-American males lack an education which causes them to shy away from institutions that require reading skills (lost Christian education).

12] Access to the pastor. Many young African-American males want easy access to the pastor which is not always the case (lost faith).

Methodology

My research set out to answer the following questions:

- 1) Why are local traditional black churches failing to reach African American males (ages 16-24)?
- 2) What is happening to young African American males (ages 16-24) when the church fails to reach and influence them and their lives?
- 3) What are the biblical responsibilities of the local church to reach African American males?

Data was compiled from three separate questionnaires, one from pastors of a traditional black church, a second one from African-American males attending traditional

black churches, and a third questionnaire from African American males not attending any church.

The second measure used to answer these three questions, and to extract data that can be used for further studies were focus groups. I was able to conduct focus group discussions at three traditional black churches including Antioch. The focus groups provided valuable information that led to new hypotheses. The men that participated articulated their chief praises and frustrations with each church in question, and why they remain a part of their church. The focus groups were conducted through group interviewing techniques, which allowed me (the researcher) to closely examine the reactions of the group to the interviewee's responses. The procedures involved were as follows:

Step 1.

Introduction of me (the researcher), the project and why I chose to do this project and how the results of the project will be used to help the work of the church in reaching African-American men. The participants were informed that the session was being photographed and tape recorded, but respondent name and identity would not be released.

Step 2.

The group session began by passing out of the questionnaire. Individuals were allowed about 15 to 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire (African-American males that attend church). See Appendix B-144.

Step 3.

Depending on the size of the group, each respondent had one to five minutes to answer the focus group questions. The focus questions were orally asked and answered.

The third measure I used to address these three research questions was questionnaires and follow-up discussions' conversations from men at four different public parks during Sunday mornings' worship hours: one park in Uniondale, two parks in Hempstead, and one park in Roosevelt, Long Island. I would travel to one of four parks every Sunday morning around 9:00 am when men gather to play basketball. Sometimes, I would visit more than one park on a Sunday. Each week I tried to make it back to the parks that had a large gathering of men to continue to build a rapport with the men.

Step one.

Once at the park I would identify an African-American male 16 and over and explain to him the work I was doing to reach African-American men ages 16-24. This would include my identity and church location.

Step two.

After explaining my work I would then ask the participant (an African-American male) to complete a questionnaire form. If the participant agrees to complete the questionnaire, I then would give him the questionnaire form (African-American males that do not attend any church) and a pencil to fill it out. If the participant refused, I would have a general conversation about church and if he was willing to continue I would ask him more specific questions regarding African-American males and the church.

Step three:

Once the participant completes the questionnaire I would collect it and give him a New Testament pocket Bible signed and dated by me with by name and phone # in case he would need to contact me in the future.

The fourth and final measure was conversations and discussions with African-American men in churches, libraries, barber shops, on public street corners, and in train stations around Hempstead, Roosevelt and Freeport.

Planning and Performing the Research Process

In order to provide a basis for addressing my three research questions, I selected two other traditional black churches one in Roosevelt and one in West Hempstead. These two churches were identified by personal relationships developed over the years with the two pastors. The churches do not have a recognized reputation for reaching African-American males. The churches were willing to allow me to come in and conduct my research. As an associate minister, it was very difficult to find a pastor of a church that would agree to allow me access to their men without any prior personal relationship. I knew that it would be an obstacle to gain access to men in other churches without a referral from my pastor. Most pastors do not allow associate ministers to preach at their church without approval from the associate minister's pastor, never mind to gain access to their church for a research study. It was my desire to research as many churches that time would allow me but a minimum of two were planned. I traveled with a member of my site team along with a couple of young men from my church who assisted me with the focus groups and questionnaires, by passing out and collecting the forms. These young men also assisted in taping and photographing the sessions for my files as well.

As mentioned earlier, the selection of the churches was determined from pastors of churches that I had established a friendship with over the years. These pastors were given a call asking them if they would participate in an anonymous study of reaching young African-American males ages 16-24 in traditional black churches. With this approach, I was not a stranger unknown by the key leader of the church. After the pastor would agree to the study, we would then agree on the date and time for the study to be conducted. Once the date was confirmed, the pastor and I would meet to go over everything that I would need and require in order to conduct the study. We would also review the instruments that would be used to gather data in the study. On the day of the study, upon arriving at the church, I would meet with the pastor and other relevant leadership. We would then proceed to the meeting room or fellowship hall in which the men would meet. I would bring a tape recorder and camera along for taping and photographing.

The group session began with prayer and then passing out the questionnaires after the men had assembled in the meeting room at the prescribed time. I and my site team member would confirm that all of the men were sixteen and older. Then this was followed by my introduction about the project and why I chose to do this project. Finally, how the project would be used to help the work of the church with reaching African-American men. The men were given about fifteen to twenty minutes to complete the questionnaire. After each man had completed the questionnaire, then the questions listed below were asked, with each respondent given a few minutes to answers.

1. What attracted you to this ministry?
2. What have you gained from this ministry?

3. Why are African-American males ages 16-24 not attending this church?
4. What ministries do you feel are not present, and if they were present, would minister to these young men?
5. What do you feel is the reason why the church has not been successful in reaching or attracting and retaining this age group?
6. What do you feel is happening to these men when the church fails to reach them?
7. What are the biblical responsibilities of the church in reaching these young men that are not attending any church?

These questions were designed to determine what these churches were or were not doing to draw and keep young men.

My input in this process was important to keep things moving in the right directions for a proper response and for clarity's purpose. The group sessions would last approximately one hour or more depending on the size of the groups. The men completing the questionnaires were the same men participating in the focus groups. The size of the focus groups varied from church to church; from ten to twenty five men. The men were informed that the session was being recorded, and that their names would not be used in the transcriptions. A list of the participating churches is in the appendices.

A second methodology used to gather data for my work was visiting the four parks around Nassau County during Sunday mornings' worship hours to reach African-American males. This method is considered relocating the church on Sunday mornings by taking the church outside the four walls into the street and parks.

My primary aim in this work was to look at why traditional black churches were not successful in reaching African-American males ages 16-24. I was looking to identify

some of the obstacles or barriers that keep traditional black churches from reaching them. I also wanted to identify at what age these young men stopped participating in church and to answer what they are seeking in a church. A further aim was to research what is happening to young African-American males when the church fails to reach them and have influence over their lives. My final aim in this work was to determine the transformation that most traditional black churches must go through in order to reach these young men.

CHAPTER 6

NARRATIVE ON FOCUS GROUPS

1. Antioch Baptist Church

On Saturday, April 5, 2008, I held my first focus group forum on reaching and mentoring young African-American males ages 16-24. We met at Antioch Baptist Church in Hempstead at 10:00 am. Coffee, orange juice, tea, and donuts, were provided. As men were coming in, they were given a questionnaire (African-American males that attend church) to complete and a pencil. The men were also given thirty minutes to complete the questionnaire from 10:00 am to 10:30 am.

The event began with a scripture reading from Genesis 45:7-8, read by a site-team member. An associate minister in attendance did the invocation prayer and table blessing. After the reading of the scripture and the prayer, I thanked the men and women for coming out and gave an overview of the project and why I chose to do this project. I explained that the main focus of the discussion was to share why most African-American males ages 16-24 are not attending any church. They were also informed that their identity and responses would be kept confidential.

Eighteen men from Antioch attended and participated in the focus group discussion. Their ages ranged from 16 to over 65 years of age. Three men were between the ages of 16 and 24, five more were between the ages 36 and 45, another six were

between the ages of 46 and 55, two also were between 56 and 65, and two more were over 65 years of age for a total of eighteen men. No men were between the ages of 25 and 35. Nine men had completed high school, six were college graduates, and one had completed Grad' school. Three men had only completed grade school. Ten men were married and six men were single. One man was divorced and another was a widow. Nine men's spouse attends the same church and one does not. Eight men have no children and ten men have children. Two have sons only and eight have both sons and daughters. Eight men grew up with one parent in the home, mother only, and six grew up with both parents in the home. Four men grew up with a mother and a stepfather in the home. Twelve men also live in the community where the church is located. Women were also in attendance and participated in the focus group discussion; however, their responses and age range will not be included for the study. In attendance were Deacons, ministers, laymen from the church along with women from the site-team. One grandmother, a member of the church, brought her grandson.

Men were given a chance to share their intimate details about Antioch and its men's ministry. After each man had completed the questionnaire, then the questions listed below were asked, with each respondent given a few minutes to answer.

1. What attracted you to this ministry?
2. What have you gained from this ministry?
3. Why are African-American males ages 16-24 not attending this church?
4. What ministries do you feel are not present, and if they were present, would minister to these young men?

5. What do you feel is the reason why the church has not been successful in reaching or attracting and retaining this age group?
6. What do you feel is happening to these men when the church fails to reach them?
7. What are the biblical responsibilities of the church in reaching these young men that are not attending any church?

Responses to what attracted you to this ministry:

One individual liked the camaraderie and strong leadership of men at Antioch.

Another individual mentioned that he grew up in the church and had a strong church background in Birmingham, Ala. He spent the summers there, and there was no question as to if you were going to church; you went every Sunday. He was also a leader in a church in Brooklyn, and was shopping around for a church that would fit his needs. He heard about a preacher who was saying good things here at Antioch.

Another individual said his mother sent him to church and his grandmother taught him. He felt that Antioch was his home.

One individual said his stepfather was the chairman of the trustee board and he grew up at a time when you had to go to church or Sunday school. He left church for college and his mother told him about the new pastor and he came back to Antioch because he felt good here. The music ministry filled his spirit, and he liked the fact that a large group of men was present in the church. He also needed a family church to help teach his family spiritual values.

A young man between the age of 16 and 24 said "his family led him." His family was going to church and he was not attending. As he grew older he started coming with

them to church and the service grew on him. He did not like it at first but as he continued, he began liking the service, the pastor, the music, and the people.

Another young man said his uncle brought him to Antioch and then he started coming along to bible study and to other things going on at the church.

Another young man between 16 and 24 years of age said his grandmother and parents brought him to the church when he was feeling frustrated about his life and now he feels less stressful because of church.

One individual was a member since the previous pastor. He was brought to Antioch by his wife. He became aware that tomorrow is not promised to you, and he continued to come but did not become a member. He heard the new pastor speak and decided to join the church, and felt a sense of family, acceptance, and that Antioch was the place where he belonged.

When the men were asked why they think African-American males ages 16-24 are not attending any church the men responded as follows:

Responses:

One young man between ages 16 and 24 said, "They can't find anything that interests them in the church because of their age. Also their affiliations with gangs keep them out of church. Their home life also makes it difficult because most young men are not from good homes. Others can't get into the church because of outside influences that force them not to go to church."

Another young man said "because of sports they don't have time for church."

One older brother said "we don't have much to offer young men at that age. Church was boring to me at that age, and I was into sports and church did not have any

sports ministries. I grew up thinking like a black militant and the church was not involved in that way. I would attend activist events rather than church. Church doesn't offer Friday night basketball, football and game night that attract young men."

One leader mentioned that he attended church all day, although it was boring and classes were too structured. He grew up in the South as a teenager and church was elderly oriented. The church was not doing and saying anything. He was restricted as to what he could do as a black child and his parents were very religious. On Sunday there were no sports and sports on Sunday was looked at as gambling. He didn't realize until he was much older that church and Sunday school were important. Back then church was where the family lived. His brother was instrumental in getting him to work in the church which gave him a voice in the things around church. He believes that we need to let the young men come up with ideas in church and have a voice.

Another leader said there is not a lot for young men to do here at the church. He also said that church is for middle-aged people. We need more activities for the young people. Because they have no voice, they are not being represented at the church meetings.

This leader mentioned that there is nothing here at the church to draw in the young men. A lot of juniors are joining because they have activities at the church for them, like bowling, and skating.

Another leader that has always been in church compared today's time to twenty to thirty years ago saying "there are more things for young men to do besides attending church. Twenty to thirty years ago there was nothing else to do except attend church. Back then young people sat right behind the elders because the elders were their mentors

and showed young men that they could succeed in life, and the elders set an example for the young men. Not so today.”

One minister said “we need to go out into the community; it’s not just about having a voice, it about being seen. Our young men need to see something. What is the church doing? We say we have it but what about going out there and giving it. No responses from the congregation about evangelizing outside the church.

Key questionnaire results:

61 percent of these men felt the church was having a lot of difficulty in reaching and retaining young African-American men ages 16-24.

50 percent of these men grew up in the northeast and 33 percent grew up in the south.

67 percent felt that men in leadership roles were very important to them in the church they attend.

72 percent also felt a mentorship ministry was very important to them in a church that they attend.

Only 17 percent felt that more sports activities was very important to them in a church they would attend. A church with male preachers was very important to only 22 percent of these men and 39 percent felt that it was not important at all.

72 percent felt that a church with job and survival skills training was very important for them.

67 percent of these men felt that the men’s ministry was effective in reaching African-American males of all ages and 33 percent felt that the mentoring ministry was effective in reaching them.

67 percent also felt that the reason why Antioch was not effective in reaching African-American males ages 16-24 was because there are no programs of interest, 72 percent felt that because young men fathers were not in church and 56 percent felt because of attire and dress code.

2. The Lutheran Good Shepherd Church

October 4, 2008, I held a second focus group forum at The Lutheran Good Shepherd Church, in Roosevelt, New York, where Reverend Jerome Taylor is the pastor. We arrived at Good Shepherd at 10:00 am. Accompanying me were two members of my site-team, two youth and one young adult from Antioch. We met with Rev, Jerome Taylor and his men's group. His men's group consisted of seven adults. The invocation prayer was done by Rev. Taylor. As the men were coming in they were given a questionnaire (African-American males that attend church) to complete with a pencil. The men were given 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

The forum began with prayer and an introduction of me by Rev. Taylor to his men's group. I thanked the men for coming out and gave them an overview of the project. I explained that the main focus of the discussion was to share why most African-American males ages 16-24 are not attending any church, particularly at their location and their identity and responses would be kept confidential. I also mentioned that I had seven questions for them to answer and discuss during the focus group if time permits. I further explained that these seven questions along with the completed questionnaires will help me gather data for my research in reaching young African-American males. I expected the session to last no longer than one and half hours.

After each man had completed the questionnaire, then the questions listed below were asked, with each respondent given a few minutes to answer.

1. What attracted you to this ministry?
2. What have you gained from this ministry?
3. Why are African-American males ages 16-24 not attending this church?
4. What ministries do you feel are not present, and if they were present, would minister to these young men?
5. What do you feel is the reason why the church has not been successful in reaching or attracting and retaining this age group?
6. What do you feel is happening to these men when the church fails to reach them?
7. What are the biblical responsibilities of the church in reaching these young men that are not attending any church?

Responses:

One individual mentioned that what attracted him to Good Shepherd was the service and he learned a lot from Pastor Taylor's teaching.

Another individual mentioned that after sending his daughter to Sunday school, his wife started to come to Good Shepherd to see what it was like and ended up staying.

One thing led to another and he started coming and ended up continuing.

A man also mentioned that he came to church to make his wife happy.

One individual said he was looking for a church with social values similarly to his former church. He found it at Good Shepherd.

Another man mentioned that there are good relationships and friends at Good Shepherd. He liked that there are a lot of men in leadership positions.

One individual said he gained enjoyment coming to Good Shepherd.

Another brother said the church gives scholarships to people on their way to college. It is a small amount but it is a start. This is what he likes about Good Shepherd.

One brother said his children were baptized here.

On the issue why young men are not in church, one brother said 16-24, young men today are not disciplined enough. Also, some do not have parents and grandparents around to help guide them in the right direction. In addition, peer pressure leads them to do negative things.

Another individual in the group mentioned that parents don't take their children to church at all anymore. Some parents today don't feel that their children need church.

Yet, another brother mentioned that if parents don't go to church nine times out of ten, their children won't go either. He went on to say, "It starts at home."

One brother said he joined church to get out of the house. His grandparents were a good mentor to him. Today young men, do not have grandparents around to mentor them. There is also a lack of neighborhood parenting.

Another brother said the parents are not allowed to discipline the children. Also peer pressure is a factor.

Also, parents are not bringing their children to church anymore. Parents are too busy working, sleeping while their children are doing whatever they want to do.

Key questionnaire results:

Three men were over 65, one was between the age 46-55, and one was between ages 56-65. Two men did not complete the questionnaire but both appear to be over 65.

All five men that completed the questionnaire had children. Two men had daughters only,

and three had both sons and daughters. Two men were widows, one was divorced, and two were married. Three men grew up in a home with both parents and two grew up with one parent in the home, a mother only. Four men also grew up in the south and one in the northeast.

Three felt that their church had a lot of difficulty in reaching African-American males ages 16-24 and two felt the church have some difficulty in reaching them.

All five men felt their church had difficulty reaching African-American males because there were no programs of interest. Three also felt that African-American males are not in church because their fathers are not in church.

When asked what is the church doing in terms of developing outreach programs for African-American males; two felt the church is doing nothing; two more felt the church is giving scholarships to reach them and two felt bible study was helpful

When asked which programs in their church have been effective in reaching African-American males two felt the men's ministry.

When asked as an African-American male attending church what is very important about a church they would consider attending, three felt a church with young adult ministries and one felt community outreach was very important.

After a group picture was taken, Rev. Taylor closed out in prayer. The session took one and a half hours.

3. St. John's Baptist Church

A third focus group forum was held on October 25, 2008 at St. John's Baptist Church in West Hempstead, NY, where Rev. William Earl Thomas is the pastor. The forum was scheduled to start at 9:00am. I arrived at the church around 9:00am and met

Pastor Thomas and his men's group. After being seated downstairs in the fellowship hall, Pastor Thomas introduced me to the men group. Before getting started Pastor Thomas led us in the invocation prayer. After the prayer, I greeted all the men present and gave them an overview of the project. I also, gave them a copy of my project brochure. I explained that the main focus of the discussion was to share why most African-American males ages 16-24 are not attending any church, particularly at their church. I also mentioned that I had seven questions for them to answer and discuss during the focus group if time permits. I further explained that these seven questions along with the completed questionnaires will help me in gathering data for my research on reaching young African-American males. I expected the session to last no longer than one and half hour.

Each man was given a questionnaire (African-American males that attend church) to complete with a pencil. The men were given 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire before starting the discussion. The men were also informed that their identity and responses would be kept confidential.

After each man had completed the questionnaire, then the questions listed below were asked, with each respondent given a few minutes to answers.

1. What attracted you to this ministry?
2. What have you gained from this ministry?
3. Why are African-American males ages 16-24 not attending this church?
4. What ministries do you feel are not present, and if they were present, would minister to these young men?
5. What do you feel is the reason why the church has not been successful in reaching or attracting and retaining this age group?

6. What do you feel is happening to these men when the church fails to reach them?
7. What are the biblical responsibilities of the church in reaching these young men that are not attending any church?

Responses:

From this ministry I gain insight; self examination, self awareness, and self perseverance.

Another individual gained wisdom and knowledge plus spiritual and biblical knowledge. The pastor was a role model for the family.

One individual said the Church helped to change his life and turn things around.

Another individual started in the music ministry at the church because he always liked music and singing. From there he got involved in other ministries that led to a leadership role in the church.

A brother said "during the civil rights days we got our manhood in the black church. The way we dress all came from going to church. After the death of King, things changed."

Preachers were the role models in the black community. Social relationships in the church were so important during that time.

If the church fails to reach the young men anything could happen; they may get by or they may end up in the system.

The Church helped teach discipline.

The reason young men are not in church at that age is because they are at the age when they can make their own choices.

Work and sports are keeping them from the church.

Church is not attractive enough for youth and young adults because there is no sports ministry.

Peer pressure causes problems for young adults.

I grew up with a Christian mom. I had to go to church. Mom said "If you hang out all night, you still had to go to church on Sunday morning."

I was taught in church to train up a child in the way he/or she should go and when that child gets old he/she will not depart from it. This is not happening today.

Without men, the church will not be as strong; you will have a weaker church.

In church you were taught how to carry yourself. If someone saw you doing something wrong it was pointed out to you.

Young people are not in church because there is a generational gap.

In church you grow; you grow to better yourself; you learn how to conduct yourself; you grow by the grace of God.

Key questionnaire results:

Five men were in attendance and five completed the questionnaire. Three men were over 65 years old, one was between the age of 46-55 and another one was between 36 and 45. Four men were married and one was divorced. All four men's spouses attend the same church. All five men have children; three have sons and daughters; one has sons only and one has daughters only. Three men have sons in the same church and one man's son attend another church. Only two men lived in the community where the church is located and three lived in another community.

Four out of the five men felt that the church has a lot of difficulty in recruiting and retaining African-American males between the ages of 16-24.

When asked as an African-American male attending church what is very important about a church you will consider attending, three men felt easy access to the pastor was very important to them. Two men also felt young adult ministries were very important. Two felt community outreach and afrocentric teaching were very important to them. Only one man felt that a mentorship ministry was very important to him. None of the men felt that a sports ministry was very important to them.

When asked which programs in your church have been effective in reaching African-American males of all ages, all five men felt that the men's ministry, three felt the music ministry, three also felt the athletic programs, and two felt the job training programs were effective.

When asked what is the church doing in terms of developing outreach programs for African-American males ages 16-24, all five men felt the church is developing scholarship aid for outreach.

When asked, why do you think African-American males between the ages of 16-24 leave the church, five felt because of sports, four men felt because they lost interest in the church, only one felt because of no programs of interest, and three felt because of job/work responsibilities.

I hope to share each group's responses to the questionnaire with them and their pastor at some future date.

CHAPTER 7

NARRATIVE ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

A. Awareness

To make the men's ministry and the congregation more aware of the need to reach young African-American males between the ages 16-24, on Sunday March 9, 2008, I was given two to three minutes to speak on the project at the 7:47 and 11:00 morning worship services. At both services brochures (see Appendix C-195) were distributed and inserted in the church bulletins announcing the project and the need to reach African-American males ages 16-24. One hundred brochures were inserted into the church bulletins and handed out to members in attendance after both services by site-team members.

Associate ministers and site-team members also wore project t-shirts (see Appendix-215) to help make men and others in the congregation more aware of the need to reach young African-American males. Five associate ministers including myself wore project t-shirts in the pulpit during both services. Members of the site-team were sitting in various areas throughout the congregation for others to view the t-shirts that they were wearing. Also, there were two young men 17 and 18 years old wearing t-shirts. The project t-shirts were red. On the front of the t-shirt it reads "*Reaching To Preserve and Save Our Brothers: African-American Males Ages 16-24*" Motto: "*You are my Brother; I was sent to preserve your life and to save your life*" Genesis 45:7-8. On the back of the t-shirt it reads, "*How to Preserve and Save Your Brothers! Identify with your brothers;*

Love your brothers; Care for your brothers; Stand with your brothers; Learn from your brothers; and Teach your brothers. In Support of Kelvin D. Redmond, Sr., Doctor of Ministry Candidate at NYTS, An Associate Minister at Antioch Baptist Church of Hempstead, N.Y., Rev., Dr. Phillip E. Elliott, Pastor. ”

As I stood to speak on the project the ministers and site-team members were asked to join me by standing in the pulpit and in the congregation to show unity among the ministers (all men) and the site team. It was a very powerful moment bringing awareness to the church. The congregation was very receptive in both services and showed it by chapping and applauding during the moment. My Pastor was out sick and was not in attendance during the kick off of the awareness. Two associate ministers decided not to wear the t-shirt which was fine. The Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons was in charge of the worship services for the day. I did notice that the Fellowship of Deacons were not too thrilled about what was taking place and were asking whether or not I had permission from the Pastor to bring awareness to the congregation. One Deacon who is a member of the site-team was also a little hesitant at first in displaying his t-shirt because he also had concerns whether the Pastor gave me permission to announce the project. Once he saw that the congregation was very receptive, he took off his jacket and displayed his t-shirt. If the congregation liked what was going on why not show that you are a part of it.

In the 7:47 worship service I estimated that there were about one hundred people in attendance of which thirty were men. Also, in the 11:00 worship service I estimated that there were about four hundred people in attendance which included some people from the 7:47 service. I estimated that there were about one-hundred and twenty-five men

in attendance. After the services, there were many requests for a project t-shirt from women and men who were in attendance. Afterward, I attended the 9:30am men's class and distributed brochures on the project.

On Wednesday March 12, 2008, I attended the 6:00 am Morning Prayer Service at Antioch and brought awareness on the need to reach African-American males ages 16-24. In attendance were about twenty individuals both men and women. Individuals were invited to attend my first "Red T-shirt" event, a focus group discussion on "Why most African-American males ages 16-24 are not in church." Members were asked to come out on April 5, 2008 to **identify** with your brothers; to come to show **love** for your brothers; to come out because you **care** about your brothers; to come out and **stand** with your brothers; to come out and **learn** from your brothers; to come out and **teach** your brothers how to preserve and save your brothers. Flyers were passed out on the upcoming April 5, 2008, 10:00 am red t-shirt event, a focus group discussion to be held at Antioch Baptist Church. For a copy of the flyer see Appendix C-191.

On Sunday, March 16, 2008, I preached at the 7:47 Worship Service on reaching African-American Males. My subject was, "I am Your Brother." Scripture reading was from Genesis 45:1-8, about Joseph and his relationship with his brothers. On that same morning I also sat in on the men's class and was given a minute or two to mention the project and the upcoming first "Red T-Shirt" event on April 5, 2008 a focus group discussion on reaching African-American males ages 16-24. The men were invited to attend the April 5, 2008 event. Men attending would receive a red project t-shirt.

On March 21, 2008, at 12:15am, I was on the radio Gospel channel 1240 AM "WGBB." I was invited by one of my site-team member to be on the show to talk about

reaching and mentoring African-American males ages 16-24. It was a fifteen minute live spot to get the word out on my project and what we were doing at Antioch, and in the community of faith in reaching and mentoring young African-American males. I was also able to announce the upcoming April 5, 2008 Red T-shirt event. This station reaches out to the community of faith in Nassau and Suffolk counties and parts of Queens. On April 4, 2008 at 12:15 am, I was again on the radio along with Bob Law a community activist, addressing the conditions of African-American males and the current state of Black men. This opportunity again provided good public relations on the project two nights before having the focus group discussion at Antioch.

B. Platform Preaching

On Saturday April 26, 2008, a half day platform preaching service was held at Antioch Baptist Church on reaching and mentoring African-American males. The service started at 10:00 am in the old sanctuary and lasted one hour. The scripture was read from Genesis 45:7-8 and followed by an invocation prayer. The hymn was "No Not One." Water and donuts was served. Two associate ministers; Reverend Bryan Lyle and Minister Charles Cooper and I were the morning speakers. No program (bulletin) was produced for this service. Each speaker was allowed 15 to 20 minutes to preach. Seven men and one woman attended the service. Several associate ministers were away on a retreat with New York Theological Seminary.

Reverend Bryan Lyle spoke from Genesis 37:2. The concern expressed in Lyle's message was about the lack of participation of young black men in church. Reverend Lyle asked "how can we effectively reach them when we don't know anything about them?" Lyle's subject was "I am old enough to be used by God." No matter what your

age is God can use you. God used an eight year old King in 2 Chr. God was using Joseph at the age of 17. His message to the young men in attendance was that you have a job to do. You are old enough that God can use you. God can use a young person to get his message through. His word to the young men was that your job is to tell other young men about God. He also mentioned that because we have one young man, we can reach another young man. Reach one and teach one how to reach one. Rev. Lyle also mentioned that we must plant the seed. We must reach them before they end up in jail. God will always create a way out but you have to want to get out; you can escape. Rev. Lyle's attitude is that we all can reach one.

Minister Cooper preached from Genesis 45:7-8 and he related the story of Joseph to his own life when he was a young man. Minister Cooper mentioned how Joseph's brothers wanted to kill Joseph, but his question was what happens when you try to kill yourself. His subject was "My Pit Experience." At the age of 17, he was at the stage in his life when he tried to commit suicide and take his own life. Cooper spoke about black men not being able to get a job at the U.S. Postal Service because they can't pass a drug test. He really shared a life revealing story about himself, trying to take his own life and how he was able to conquer his own pit experience and drive it out of his mind. Minister Cooper equated black on black crime to being suicidal. Cooper mentioned that a pit surrounds you with only one way out and that is up. He called for young men to surrender it all to God. He wanted to convey to the young men in attendance the pitfalls of drugs and alcohol. Drugs and alcohol are pitfalls in life that will disqualify you. He encouraged the young men to take control of their own lives.

I preached from Genesis 45:7-8 and my subject was "Dream Killers." I had three options in life after high school; to go to college, or go in the military or get a job. I decided to go to college and it paid off. My message to the young men was don't do what is expected of you because you are a young black man. They expect young black men to do drugs; they expect young black men to participate in crime, to disrespect their women and to pay child support, and to be incarcerated. They expect you to be unemployed. They expect black men to not get an education. So don't do what they expect of you, but do what is unexpected of you as a black man; get an education, take care of your family, don't do the crime because you will pay by doing the time. One problem that President Obama had during the primary was that he was influenced by a black man, Reverend Wright. Teen pregnancy is a dream killer along with paying child support. Black on black crime is another dream killer. Homicide is also a dream killer. A problem with drugs and alcohol is another dream killer. Incarceration is a dream killer.

Responses:

One individual felt that he was enlightened and wanted to bring his sons to the panel discussion.

Another individual felt that we have excluded our young men in a lot of ways. We need to tell them that we are here to learn from them and we would like to know what their concerns are. He also mentioned that we have to stand with them to fight this battle.

The attendance was poor for this service. Also, I was not able to get support from the men's ministry for this service. One obstacle that I came across in having the platform preaching was that the women's retreat took place the same weekend. With the women being away, the men in the church were left to take care of the home and the children.

This may be the reason for a low turnout among the men of Antioch. Also, I did not get the approval from the Pastor timely enough to send out letters to other churches. Finally, there was no announcement from the pulpit about the platform preaching.

C. Panel Discussion

On Saturday, May 17, 2008, I held a 3rd Red T-shirt Event a morning breakfast panel discussion. We had a nine member panel to discuss “What is happening with young African-American males? I prepared a list of 20 questions for discussion on the condition of African-American men.

Panel:

1. Reginald Strouhn, Sr., Principal of Hempstead High School.
2. George A. Jones, Chairman of Urban League of Long Island Board of Directors.
3. Max Rose, Legislative Analyst of Suffolk County
4. Onte’ Johnson, College Student, Bronx, NY
5. Bryan S. Jones, Sr., Community Visionary and Motivator Speaker of Hempstead.
6. Chotsani Williams, Director, Liberty Partnerships Program/Coordinator, Mentoring Programs, for the Institute for Student Achievement.
7. Dr. William McLaurin, Hempstead Schools Hearing and Suspension Officer and Dmin. Project Site Team, Chairman.
8. Mark Richards, CBAPP Uniondale Coordinator, Planned Parenthood of Nassau County.
9. Corey Pegues, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, L.I. Chapter.

Flyers were printed and distributed to the men’s ministry and members of the congregation on the event. Announcements were made from the pulpit by the Pastor.

A continental breakfast was prepared, bottle water, orange juice, tea and coffee for drinks, bagels, eggs, grits and beacon.

I facilitated the event. A sign-in sheet was used for attendance. Also an evaluation form was handed out to attendees to evaluate the moderator and the forum. Project T-shirts were available for young men participating and attending the event.

Name tags were prepared for the panelist.

The panel discussion was set to start at 10:00 to 12 noon. Scripture reading by Rev. Redmond was from Genesis 45:7-8 and prayer of invocation and table blessing by Deacon Jimmie Davis. Hymn was "No Not One." Breakfast was self served. Closing prayer was by Deacon Chatman.

Introduction of the panelist was done by Rev. Redmond.

Question 1:

Mr. Jones, from the National Urban League ("NUL") of Long Island was asked to share his thoughts on the call from NUL, President Marc Morial about the "Equality Gap" that young African-American men face today?

Response:

Mr. Jones response was that we need to start training our young men in the womb. We need to start training our children before 13 and 14 years of age. It is too late at 13 and 14 years of age in recapturing parental neglect.

Question 2:

Question 2 was addressed by Corey Pegues, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, L. I. Chapter. The rate of returning to prison varies with age; younger inmates between ages 17 to 24 have the highest rates, 60-70 percent. According to the NYS Coalition for Justice and the Center for the Justice Education, there is severe racial discrimination in the criminal justice system that pervades the extremely high

imprisonment rate of people in America. Can you speak to the discrimination in the justice system?

Response:

It all has to do with criminal profiling. Young people have to take more responsibility for self.

Question 3:

Ante Johnson, why do you feel our young men are missing from the church?

Response:

Ante Johnson responded by saying "everything is centered on our environment.

Parents have to step up. Parents must show more love for their children. You are what is on the inside of you.

Question 4:

We are seeing a steady drop in youth membership and attendance in the black church. What do you believe is the cause of the decrease in young people in the black church?

Response:

Bro. Jones explained that there are no males 16-24 in church because the church has walls. The reality is that we have to knock down the walls. Young people are in pain. Some people don't want to hear you. We must meet people where they are. It all equates to slavery. We need to get to the heart of the problem. The only way to address this is from the root; the core. We must get to the root of the problem.

Question 5

Are we preparing our sons today for the world outside the home, the church?

Response:

Principal Stroughlin responded by saying, "the system does not want the black males to succeed. Here everybody tries to take from everyone else. At Hempstead High I am trying to change the culture and to make school more of a value to the student.

Sis Williams responded by saying "we all have an obligation to give back, but she is limited as a woman. She tries to empower the young men she works with. Now to others who have not picked up the torch, we can build. Where are the men in published mentoring articles? Women have signed up to be mentors. Men have to step up to the plate.

A respond from a man in the audience said he has two kids. His son was stopped twice by cops. The youngest son was stopped while walking through a park. 80-85 percent of the people are African-American or Hispanic. What we are not doing is being active. We need to be more proactive. Where are the urban league and the NAACP? We all are working but are we working together? We need to make the transition from theory to practice.

Max Rose responded by saying he grew up in Amityville. He understood that by having an education it could get you anywhere. Young men should have a back-up plan if they do not go off to college. We are representing not just an entire community but an entire race. Organizations should not be fighting one another.

Dr. McLaurin responded by saying everything he heard today he heard 20 years ago. We love talking about problems. Can we have a conference on solutions? We need to deal with solutions. The church must change. We need to spend some time outside.

D. Reaching Training

The goal was to recruit and train a core team (associate ministers and laymen in the church) of men to reach and to become mentors to young African –American males ages 16-24. The training was planned to take place in late April and to be performed by my Pastor and invited guests. I was unsuccessful in getting Pastor to train a core group of men to go out into the hedges and highways to compel African-American males to come in.

One reason I felt that Pastor did not do the training or invite an outsider in to do the training, was because there is an evangelism team already in place at the church that was going out once a week on Thursday evenings to reach people in the community for Christ. Another obstacle may have been that I planned to go out on Sunday mornings throughout the summer during morning worship hours to reach African-American males. Maybe he saw this as a conflict to the ministry at Antioch. In reading Rev. Theodore P. Fields book titled “*All The Pastors Men: The Associate Minister in the Black Church Setting*,” Fields mentioned that “prior to attempting to implement anything in the local church, the associate minister should clear it through the pastor and get his approval. If the work of the ministerial staff or any group in the church is to be a meaningful and pleasant experience, they must cooperate with and support the program of the pastor.”¹³¹ I realized that even if other associate ministers were willing to go out on Sunday mornings they would seek the Pastor’s permission. Most associate ministers would rather be sitting behind the pastor on Sunday mornings especially at the 11:00am service. Fields also mentioned that “the associate minister should always guard against any conflict with

¹³¹ Rev. Theodore P. Fields, *All The Pastors Men: The Associate Minister in the Black Church Setting* (n.p.: 1st Book Library, 2003), 185.

the goals and aims of the pastor.”¹³² Although Pastor gave me the nod to do the project it did not mean that he fully agreed with it. On this part of the project I did not get the nod from my Pastor, therefore it was not performed. Also, every July after the week following the 4th, the church has an annual three day tent crusade “Help, Healing and Hope Crusade” for the community where the evangelism team goes out into the community witnessing to lost souls. There may have been a conflict trying to get others to go out around the same time the evangelism team was going out. The Pastor sent the evangelism team out. How can you go if you were not sent? I was unable to take advantage of coordinating the training around the tent crusade. However, all was not lost; my Pastor did allow me to do a lecture at the tent crusade on reaching African-American males ages 16-24. On July 10, 2008, I did a lecture before the preaching under the tent on “Reaching Generation X.” I estimated one hundred-fifty people were in attendance. Scripture reading was Matthew 28:19-20, “*The Great Commission*.” I discussed the following:

- What is our role in the world as Christians in reaching.
- The role and life of Jesus “Came to seek and to save what is lost”
- Luke 15 “The chapter of the lost things”
- The celebration when the lost was found “there is more rejoicing in Heaven over one sinner who repents that over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”
- The challenge black churches face today in confronting the validity of the new worldview.
- The societal ills plaguing young black men.

¹³² Ibid.

- Cultural implication for young black men.
- Christ over Culture.
- The way to reach, teach and keep young men in church (Reaching Generation X).

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1. To establish rapport with Generation X.
2. To get Generation X to comprehend and hear your message.
3. To make the message relevant to Generation X lives.

An evaluation form was used to rate the lecture and lecturer (See Appendix B-188).

E. Mentoring Training

The mentoring training session was held at Antioch Baptist Church in Hempstead on Saturday, October 18, 2008 at 10:00am in the Fellowship Hall, hosted by Rev. Kelvin D. Redmond, Sr. This mentoring training session was in support of a Doctor of Ministry Project "Reaching African-American males ages 16-24." All participants attending the two-hour Mentor/Mentee training session will receive a mentor/mentee training certificate signed by Rev. Dr. Phillip E. Elliott, Pastor and Ms. Chosanti Williams, trainer. This training session was all inclusive; men and women. I requested that individuals interested in becoming mentors to bring someone that they would like to mentor. I discovered when reaching out in the parks and on the streets that the young men that I came across, many were related to someone in the church. They are our family members out there in the parks.

A full breakfast was prepared: eggs, bacon, bagels, grits, orange juice, bottle water, tea and coffee.

¹³³ Petersen, *Church Without Walls*, 208-210.

Facilitator: Ms. Chosanti Williams, M.A. Educational Leadership & Technology

Trainer.

The session was opened with prayer and a table blessing by Dr. William McLaurin.

All participants were assembled seated in a circle. Ms. Williams asked each member of the group to introduce themselves and share the name and relationship with the person or people that most influenced their lives.

The responses included:

- Father
- Mother
- Grandfather/Grandmother
- Math Teacher
- Uncle/Aunt
- Other professional individual
- Neighbor
- Pastor/Pastor's Wife

When asked further to explain why the above-mentioned individuals were important, the responses included:

- *"Always there for me"*
- *"taught me independence"*
- *"disciplined me"*
- *"the individual was selfless"*
- *"told me I would be the best student" (encouragement)*

- “*taught me respect*”

Ms. Williams mentioned that mentoring takes time, patience and love. It takes one year or more to get through to a person you are mentoring. Ms. Williams shared the following scripture references on the qualities of a mentor:

- Matthew 5:13-14 “Salt and light.”
- 1 Corinthians 12:27 “I am a member of the Body of Christ.”
- Roman 8:28 “All things work together for Good.”

As a Christian, it is Ms. William’s interpretation that God intends that we have a responsibility to self-reflect and to impart new information and knowledge to others.

Two or three role playing exercises were performed and discussed within the group. The outcomes of these individual skits led to observations and conclusions about the mentor/mentee relationship. It is important that the mentor be prepared to interact with the mentee on their level with the goal of bringing the mentee into the mentor’s “world.” Young people want structure. There is a fine line between respect and fear; tough love is in between the two. Mentors must ask themselves, “are we listening to young people?”

The young men in the group were asked what they are looking for in a mentor. More specifically, “What are their needs?” Their responses included:

- Hardworking individuals
- Some one who has the same interest or concern about what I care about-e.g. loves pets, creative, artistic, etc.
- An individual who loves his job as a mentor. *If the mentor loves his job as a mentor, he will love his mentee.*”

- An individual that can relate to his mentee, analyze the mentee and understand his language (the term bilingual was used to describe, the difference in phrases and words used by young people versus the mentor's language).
- A mentor that is transparent and can share "real life experiences."
- A leader.
- Friendly relationships with mentee and others.
- Someone who can share ideas, be a guide, kind, makes the right decisions.
- Respects the mentee.

Ms. Williams also explained that the average time spent together in a one year structured mentor program the mentor and mentee generally meet two times for four hours per month. One of the young men suggested that a half hour per week would give him a greater feeling of consistency. The relationship between mentor and mentee is a reciprocal relationship.

Many of the adults in the group shared personal testimonies of challenges in their lives that contributed to the loss of meaningful relationships between fathers and sons, which continue to plague many families today that are headed by single female parents.

Through the testimonies, it was interesting to note, how disconnected or dysfunctional relationships between the parents of a male child impacts the development and needs of the child throughout his entire life.

Next steps include what is necessary to become a mentor.

- Self-reflection
- Application

- Fingerprinting – fingerprinting is a national process and is required for mentoring outside of the church structure.
- It is recommended that mentoring sessions begin in a group forum.
- A consent form must be completed to ensure acknowledgement from the young men's parents that the child is a part of the mentoring program
- Mentor/Mentee must make a minimum one-year commitment.

The session was closed out with prayer at 1:30pm. Breakfast was then served as lunch.

All attendees who expressed an interest in receiving certificates of training, signed by Rev. Dr. Phillip E. Elliott and Ms. Chosanti Williams were provided one. Twenty-seven certificates were issued.

Although we have been meeting with young men throughout the duration of the project, my Pastor and I have agreed to have the mentoring session on the 3rd Saturday of every month. I also have started assigning mentors to mentees. The first two sessions have involved developing codes of conducts and teaching life skills and core values for these young men.

I also have discovered in working with young men from the church and young men outside the church that the best form of communication with them is by "text message" These young men do not like to communicate on the phone, but they will communicate through text messaging.

F. Park Ministry

On Sunday, July 13, 2008, I started the reaching ministry by going out to a local park in the community. My first scheduled stop was Westbury Blvd Park located on the

borderline of Hempstead and Uniondale on Westbury Blvd in Uniondale, New York. The park is about a ten minute walk from the church. This location was an ideal place to start because men of all ages gather at this location during church hours near the church to play basketball. If you want to reach men that do not attend any church then you need to go out into the community where they are when church is in session.

My plan was to have the men that do not attend any church complete a questionnaire form. The only age restriction for men completing the questionnaire was that they must be sixteen or over. Each man that completes a questionnaire form would receive a signed New Testament pocket Bible (The Gideons International version) from me.

The questionnaire will gather:

- Some data on whether these men were ever a member of a church before,
- Whether they attended church on a regular basis and what was their denomination affiliation.
- It will also gather data on reasons why they stopped attending church and at what age.
- It also will gather data on ministries that they participated in while attending church.
- It will also, gather data on a church these men will or will not consistently attend;
- Questions about their life; and questions about African-American males' social problems and situations.

- Data collected from completed questionnaires will help me understand some reasons why African-American men do not attend any church; and what influences and impacts their lives.
- The ultimate goal is to use this information to formulate an outreach and recruitment plan.

I left home that July Sunday morning around 8:45am on my 2006 Honda VTX 1300 cruiser motorcycle packed with questionnaire forms, project t-shirts and brochures, New Testament pocket Bibles, pencils and a tape recorder. I was dressed in a blue sweat suit wearing my red project t-shirt underneath. I arrived at the park around 9:30am and a basketball game was already in session. The park has two full basketball courts with four basketball rims. The main court where the men play on is the northeast court as you enter the park. The men play four-on-four basketball games and the first team that scores 21 points is the winner. The losing team must leave the court and a new four man team will play against the winning team. The winning team stays on the court until another team beats them in the game of 21. I also noticed a barbecue grill next to a picnic table and coolers used to store drinks.

As I sat down to watch the game, I noticed old friends that I grew up with and played ball against on Sunday mornings over 25 years ago who were still playing ball at this very same location, today. I immediately greeted them and gave them a hand shake and embraced them as they embraced me. Even the brothers that didn't know me embraced me as well. It was a very friendly atmosphere. I had already started enjoying myself and the research that I planned. I also noticed relatives of members of my church in the park. There was a pastor's brother already playing ball on the court whose father

and mother are members of my church. I would consider him to be an inactive member of the church. Two sons of a Deacon and Deaconess at my church were also in attendance and one had his daughter approximately eight or nine years of age with him. I thought that this young one should probably have been in Sunday school. Her grandmother, a Deaconess teaches one of the Sunday school class at church. There were about twenty-five men all African-Americans in the park when I arrived. From what I was told, they start playing basketball around 9:00am every Sunday morning provided that there is no rain or inclement weather in the forecast. The weather on this Sunday morning was not too hot and not too cool. It was breezy; sunny with some clouds in the sky and the temperature was around 75 degrees when I arrived. This was great weather for basketball and a great day to be absent from Church and working on a reaching ministry.

I did not immediately identify myself as a preacher or reverend from the local church. The two sons of the Deacon and Deaconess did not realize that I was a minister from the church where their parents are members. The brother of a pastor and maybe one other brother knew who I was. The reason I did not identify myself immediately as a preacher was because I feared a negative or false positive reaction from the men which could have jeopardized my work at this location. However, if the brothers would have read the t-shirt that I was wearing they would have known my identity and project.

If I were in church, the 7:47 early worship service would be over and I would be teaching the confirmation class which starts after morning worship at around 9:00am. I did place a call to my Pastor earlier reminding him that I would not be in the 7:47 and 11:00 worship services throughout the month of July. While sitting on the park bench, I needed an opening to get started on completing the questionnaires. After all, I was a

stranger to most of the men in the park. I thought that as soon as I can get an opening I will jump on it. Then the opening came when a brother that had just arrived in the park shook hands with everyone around the picnic table and our eyes connected. He knew me from the church. So I told him I was writing a thesis about African-American males that attend church and African-American males that do not attend any church. I asked him if he would complete a questionnaire form on African-American males not attending any church. He answered, "why not." One thing quickly led to another and I asked two other brothers and they also agreed. One brother that I knew was undecided on whether to complete a questionnaire. So I said I would read it to him thinking that he could not read. So he agreed and I started asking him the questions on the questionnaire. It turned out that he could read and maybe he didn't want to take the time out to read it himself. One thing that I learned about African-American men when you asked them to complete a survey or questionnaire you have to take in consideration whether they can or cannot read and write. I also learned from this experience that most African-American men do not like to take time out to read information especially when they consider it an infringement on their recreation time.

As these men were completing the questionnaire another brother came up to them to see what they were doing. As he looked over their shoulders being curious, he asked them "were they in school again." This brother happens to be the brother-in-law of one of my site-team members and his mother and sister are active members at the church. So I explained to him the project that I was working on and asked him if he would complete a questionnaire. He refused. I believed he didn't really trust me.

It was now around 9:45 am, and more brothers were pouring into the park not just to play and watch basketball but also to fellowship with one another. Basketball is not the only activity that goes on in this park. These brothers also break bread together, play cards and chess. One brother started lighting the barbecue grill while others entering the park were bringing in packages and bags of food; hamburgers, franks, steaks, rolls, beer, and sodas. One of the sons of the Deacon and Deaconess at my church was in charge of the grill and collecting the money from brothers in the park to buy more food for the morning cookout. I contributed five dollars to the cause in an effort to build some rapport with these men.

The group of men I was sitting with were next to play on the court. As I was collecting the completed questionnaire forms more brothers agreed to fill one out. Each brother that completed the questionnaire form received a signed New Testament Pocket Bible from me with my phone number written inside just in case they may need me in the future. I hope that they will keep this with them. One brother asked me where was Psalm 23 in the pocket Bible because it was important for him to find it and read it. So I showed him where Psalm 23 was located in the back behind the book of Revelation along with Proverbs. As he turned to it, he had a smile of relief on his face as he located it. One thing I do know, you don't always have to ask a brother if he is saved or not and offer him Christ. You can just put the Word in his hand. The Scripture says in John 1:1; "in the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God." If he accepts then he is on the way toward accepting Christ.

By now it was 10:15am and with the grill lit, I estimated that about fifty brothers were in the park. I also began to smell marijuana in the park. Some brothers were rolling

marijuana cigarettes together to smoke. Other brothers were standing around laughing, joking and drinking beer. Yet others were talking about where they were hanging out the night before and others were talking about sports, women and politics. Some were laughing about brothers arguing on the basketball court. To win and stay on the basketball court you cannot just be a good and physical player, you also need to be able to argue, out-shout your brother and sometimes even curse him out. I also found out about relationships in the park. There were a few brothers playing with and against their sons on the court. The sons were in their mid and late twenties, while their fathers were in their fifties. In the African-American community we place a lot of emphasis on sports, particularly basketball and football. So in this instance, it was "like father like son."

The ages of the brothers in the park ranged from 14 to 55 years of age. Most of the younger brothers in their twenties and thirties played high school sports. Brothers in their late 40's and early 50's that I played ball with stood and or sat around watching as though they were retired from the game. They were telling the younger brothers about how it was twenty years ago when they played. The younger brothers were in great physical shape and it took me back to the days when I was in tip top form and ready to bang, push and jump for rebounds. Some of their physical physiques were like prototypes of Paul Robeson's statue.

Several basketball games were played by these men throughout the morning. Some games took longer than others because they were more competitive; more disruptive by stop and go activities because of fouls and arguments over calls. The last basketball game was played by 1:30pm because of the heat. The temperature outside at this time had well exceeded 87 degrees which is too hot to continue to play. The brothers

were now gathered around the picnic table and grill ready to eat. A chess game and a card game were in process at this time. I was able to fellowship and eat with the brothers.

All activities in the park ended around 3:00pm. I estimated that I stayed in the park about five hours and a half from 9:30am to 2:45 pm getting questionnaires completed, making observations, talking to brothers and building relationships.

Some of the results of spending Sunday mornings and afternoons at Westbury Blvd. Park were as follows:

- 1) 23 men out of approximately 50 men in the park completed a questionnaire form on African-American males not attending any church.
- 2) 23 men received a New Testament Bible signed by me.
- 3) Several men shared their personal thoughts on why African-American men don't attend any church.
- 4) Several brothers requested t-shirts.
- 5) A relationship was established with these men in this park.

I continued to visit this park several Sundays throughout July and August on July 20, July 27, August 3, August 17, August 24, and August 31, 2008. I was able to get additional questionnaires completed at this location throughout the summer and I gathered additional research data from those men that do not attend any church.

My relationship with these men grew throughout the summer. I was able to enter the park at later dates in a suit and tie. I earned their respect where they would address me as reverend. To them I was a recognizable face around the community.

I was able to reach these men that play basketball on these courts Sunday after Sunday during the summer months. My work is not over. This is just the beginning. I will continue to go out to this location in the future to continue building relationships with these men and attempt to develop a plan to get them to the church.

Reaching at Other Parks

On Sunday, August 17, 2008, I took my reaching ministry to Centennial Park on the corner of Centennial Avenue and Babylon Turnpike in Roosevelt, N.Y. This park is known for its great basketball tournaments and ball players. NBA Hall of Famer Julius Irving ("Dr. J") played on these same basketball courts during his school years coming out of Roosevelt High School. I selected this park after touring the area the Sunday before between services with an associate minister from Antioch. This is the same Roosevelt area that Donnie McClurkin holds "Church Without Walls" services every Sunday afternoon during the summer months in a parking lot located a couple of blocks away. Church Without Walls services begin at 3:00pm. Also located a couple of blocks away is Julius Irving PAL Center. In the surrounding area of the park are a couple of Pentecostal churches and also down the street on Babylon Turnpike is The Memorial Presbyterian Church of Roosevelt, where Reverend Dr., Tuggle is Pastor.

I chose this park because it also is where men gather during church hours to play basketball. Sunday mornings during the worship hour are fast becoming one of the most segregated hour between African-American men and women; and parents and young men not just between Whites and Blacks. Where are our men on Sunday mornings? They are in the parks; gyms and homes (beds) if not in the churches. Some are on their jobs but there are an awful lot of brothers in the parks.

I also visited this park on the following dates:

- Sunday, August 10, 2008
- Sunday, August 24, 2008
- Sunday, August 31, 2008
- Sunday, September 21, 2008

Some of the results of spending Sunday mornings and afternoons at Centennial were as follows:

- 6) 15 men completed a questionnaire form on African-American males not attending any church.
- 7) 15 men received a New Testament Bible signed by me.
- 8) Several men shared their personal thoughts on why African-American men don't attend any church.
- 9) Several brothers requested t-shirts.

On Wednesday, July 16, and 23, 2008, I visited Kennedy Park located on Greenwich St, in Hempstead. This park has a gym for men to play basketball. During the summer months there is a High School youth basketball league going on at this park. The league was started by retired New York Jet football player, Rob Moore a graduate of Hempstead High School. Sixteen teams participate in this league. To play in this league you must be a student in high school. With sixteen teams and ten men per team we are talking about a minimum of one hundred-sixty young men between the ages of 14-17 gathering every Wednesday and Thursday in this gym to play basketball. This does not include the young men that are sitting in the stands watching their friends and brothers play basketball. I estimated with fathers and male friends watching from the stands, there

were at least 250 men in the gym when I was there. Any church would love to have this many youth participate in its worship services. I was able to get some questionnaires completed but not many compared to the number of men in the gym. Also, men from the summer parks where I was implementing my reaching project gather in this gym on Sunday mornings during the winter to play basketball.

On Saturday, October 4, 2008, I also visited Hempstead Mirschel Park, another park in Hempstead. It was in a joint effort with H.E.V.N. Coalition (an organization that stands against gang violence) to reach out to the community. H.E.V.N. was having its 4th annual community awareness "Get Help Now Family Day" providing food and recreation to the community to end family violence. Terrace Avenue is considered one of the worst neighborhoods in Hempstead. Three young men that accompanied me to this park were afraid to leave the car because of the bad reputation and gang activity that this neighborhood is known for. They also did not want to be seen with a red t-shirt on because red is a gang color. However, I was able to reach out to the young men in the park that were from this neighborhood. I was able to get at least 10 questionnaires completed by young men in the park. I invited several young men to the mentoring training session on October 18, 2008. One young man that was working with H.E.V.N., that I got to meet, his son was shot to death by another young man on December 19, 2007 over dating the same young lady. His son was only nineteen years old.

Discussions that I had with the young men that completed the questionnaire were about church, jobs, unemployment, school, and mentoring.

CHAPTER 8

NARRATIVE ON PLAN EVALUATION

Awareness:

Goal one was to raise the awareness among the congregation and the men's ministry, for the need to reach young African-American males ages 16-24 by performing the following:

Strategy 1. Attend and speak at two Saturday evening Laymen's for Christ rehearsals and two Sunday morning men's classes in order to provide the men's ministry with information on the condition of African-American males and make them more aware of the need to reach African-American males ages 16-24.

Result:

Based on the attendance and the number of completed questionnaires returned at the focus group session on April 4, 2008, I felt the men's ministry was made more aware of the need to reach these young men. Eighteen men attended the focus group session and completed the questionnaire, which is 10 percent of the men at Antioch. In addition, the eighteen men represent more than 25 percent of the men that attend the Sunday morning men's class and the Laymen for Christ rehearsals. I only expected four to six men to attend. Also, men that do not attend the Sunday morning men's class and are not apart of the Laymen for Christ Chorus, were made more aware from the pulpit and the brochures that were distributed. The core group of men in the church did participate in the

awareness. The congregation was also made more aware through the announcement from the pulpit at both the 7:47am and 11:00am worship services.

Conclusion:

I concluded that the men's ministry and the congregation at Antioch were made more aware of the need to reach young African-American males ages 16-24. Also, 61 percent felt that Antioch was having some difficulty in reaching African-American males ages 16-24.

Strategy 2. To make the men of Antioch and the community of faith more aware the need to reach young men, a half day platform preaching service was planned on Saturday April 26, 2008. I expected a minimum of 50 men to attend the service. I also expected seven associate ministers to participate.

Results:

Based on the attendance and the number of associate ministers that participated in the half-day platform preaching event, I felt that the result was not good. However, based on the quality of the message and the testimonies shared afterwards, I felt it was a success. Twelve people attended and two associate ministers participated. Several young men were in attendance with their fathers. I expected 50 men to attend and only 12 men attended.

Conclusion:

I conclude that there was a low turnout because of scheduling and a failure to get the word out. However, I also, conclude that the quality of the messages brought forth made the attendees more aware of the condition of young African-American males and a

need to reach them. The young men from this event attended the May 17, 2008 panel discussion.

Strategy 3. I also planned a Saturday morning breakfast panel discussion to bring about awareness to reach young African-American males by having two big named guest speakers. I expected a large turnout from the community.

Results:

Based on the attendance and scheduling of the panel discussion at the same time as college graduations, the turnout was excellent. I was not able to get two big named speakers but I was able to get important people from the community to participate on the panel. There were nine panelists and they all were great speakers. There was a female mentor of the year for young men, a High School principal, a former High School principal, a police officer and mentor, two young men, a National Urban league board member and two community organizers on the panel. We expected a large turnout and there was a large turnout of 38 people including the panel..

Conclusion:

Based on the attendance and the number of young men that came out I concluded that this panel discussion was a success. Also the feedback from the evaluation forms were positive: 20 evaluation forms were returned out of 28 (excluding the panel); 16 individuals liked the format of the panel discussion and 4 did not; 19 people said they would attend another panel discussion on this subject in the future; 18 people felt the moderator was good to outstanding; 16 people would like to get involved in reaching and mentoring African-American males ages 16-24. All 20 felt the panel was knowledgeable about the subject matter.

Training:

Goal two was to recruit and train a core team of men to reach and to become mentors to young African-American males ages 16-24.

Strategy 1. To recruit men and associate ministers, I planned to place announcements in the church bulletins and recruit from the questionnaire and evaluation forms. I expected 4-6 men to volunteer to become part of the reaching ministry.

Results:

I was unable to get men to participate in this project reaching ministry because there was another evangelism team going out into the community at the start of my project. This group was being sent out by the Pastor. It was a obstacle for getting men to join me in reaching. As an associate minister no one would support me without the pastor's approval.

Conclusion:

I conclude at this time no training could be done to reach young African-American males. An outreach ministry is targeted for this specific group. God is still good.

Strategy 2. Three training sessions were planned to be performed in late April 2008, for reaching, mentoring and locating young African-American males.

Result:

Only one training session was provided for mentoring young African-American males ages 16-24. This training session took place October 18, 2008 at Antioch Baptist church. The training session was well attended by both adults and young adults. It was all

inclusive; male and female; 36 people attended the training session; 27 individuals received a two hour mentor/mentee training certificate.

Conclusion:

Based on the result of the mentoring training session with 27 individuals receiving a certificate on training I conclude this training session was a success. It shows that members want to mentor our young adults. Based on my observation more women are interested in mentoring young women than men are interested in mentoring young men.

Also I performed a lecture on reaching Generation X on July 10, 2008 and based on the returned evaluation forms, 14 out of 20 people said they would like to get involved in reaching and mentoring young men ages 16-24. I only can conclude that the majority of them would probably get involved if the Pastor were involved in the reaching and the mentoring.

Subsequent to the mentoring training session on Saturday, November 15, 2008 four young men showed up for a mentoring session on codes of conducts and developing core values. Seven mentors were available.

Reaching:

Goal three was to implement the reaching plan to reach African-American males ages 16-24 that are not attending church.

Strategy 1. In mid May through June 2008, was the time set aside for the team to go out once a week for four weeks on Sunday mornings to various locations in the community previously determined from the training sessions.

Results:

I started going out on Sunday, July 13, 2008 to various parks in Hempstead and Roosevelt to reach African-American males not attending church. The locations were based on where a large group of African-American men gathered to play basketball on Sunday mornings while church was in session. Two parks were chosen, one in Hempstead and one in Roosevelt for the main focus of reaching African-American males that do not attend any church.

Results:

47 men were reached through this reaching ministry. Their ages ranged from 16 years of age to 55 years of age. Forty New Testament Bibles were issued to men that do not attend any church. Forty-seven questionnaires were completed by men that do not attend any church. Eleven men were between the ages of 16-24, another 8 were between the ages of 25-34, 14 were between the ages of 35-44, and 10 were between 45 and 54. I went out a total of 10 days 6 Sundays, 2 Tuesdays and 2 Saturdays.

Strategy 2 Mid May through November 2008 each African-American male reached would be invited to attend a focus group rap session at Antioch and be assigned to a role model.

Result:

Out of the 11 men reached between the ages of 16-24, none attended the focus groups rap sessions at the church. Most of the young men who attended the mentoring session were brought by members in the church. Two grandmothers were instrumental in getting their grandsons involved in the mentoring session. Two young men are from the church. One young man in college was able to use me as a reference to get a holiday job

during college break. My Pastor and I agreed to have the mentoring group meet on the third Saturday of each month beginning November 15, 2008.

Conclusion:

I believe that the ministry is working in spite of some of the obstacles I encountered from the onset. Also, there are a few young men related to church members in this age group that are having problems outside the church in school and in the justice system that are now beginning to come to the church for mentoring and help.

CHAPTER 9

MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES

Competency Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Evaluation Process

Goal:

I plan to improve my skills and become more competent as a worship leader in the field of sacred music and other art forms and the role it plays in liturgy by effectively implementing sacred hymns in meetings and worship services during the duration of my project.

Strategy 1:

Read a book on music in the Black church to improve my skill and competency in this area.

Strategy 2:

I plan to select and coordinate the appropriate music and sacred hymns for meetings and worship services during the duration of my project.

Evaluation Process:

I will have an experienced Deacon in the church that is a member of the site-team evaluate my growth in this area.

Spiritual Leader:

Goal:

To become more spiritually disciplined in worship and meetings during the duration of my project.

Strategy 1:

I plan to use techniques from *Claiming All Things for God* by George D. McClain on how to become a better spiritual leader to bring about social change during the duration of my project. I will also read *The Holy Spirit: The Helper We all Need* by Fredrick K.C. Price.

Strategy 2:

I plan to lead all meetings and services relating to my project spiritually through meditation and prayer.

Evaluation Process:

I will have an experienced Deacon in the church that is a member of the site-team evaluate my growth in this area.

Ecumenist:

Goal:

To improve as an Ecumenist through organizing interdenominational worship services.

Strategy:

I plan to organize one interdenominational worship service for my project.

Evaluation Process:

I will document and videotape this interdenominational worship service.

Ministerial Competencies Evaluation

As Worship Leader:

To improve my skills and become more competent as a worship leader during the duration of my project one of the books I read was J. Wendell Mapson, Jr., *"The Ministry Of Music In The Black Church."* I learned that worship is God-centered. Worship is also natural and necessary because of Gods redeeming activity on African-Americans historically. Worship and song is a bridge that connected the old and the new. In 1 Corinthians 14:26, "when you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification." During site-team meetings and project events, I led worship by singing a hymn, reading a scripture, and praying. I used my time in worship to build up the family of God. Within the Black church, music is divided into three main categories:

- The Negro spirituals – Emerged out of slavery (The spirituals expressed the full range of human emotion: pain, fear, joy, sorrow, despair, hope, futility and faith. Also called "sorry songs").¹³⁴
- Meter hymn - Originated in the 1800s by Dr. Isaac Watts and the Wesley brothers (they were easy to remember and fit very well the spirit of the "invisible church)." The popularity of the meter style hymns was compatible with the social context of the day.¹³⁵
- Gospel music - Refers to a certain feeling, tone, and freedom of improvisation that allows the black singer to sing the same song differently each time it is sung,

¹³⁴ J. Wendell Mapson, Jr., *The Ministry Of Music In The Black Church* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1984), 36.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 37.

not bound by written music. Gospel music in the black church has a distinct sound and spontaneity all its own.¹³⁶

Worship is the corporate celebration of what God has done through Jesus Christ and his continuing presence through the work and power of the Holy Spirit. Music and songs in worship must not be reduced to a mere exercise in self-aggrandizement.

Evaluation Process:

An experienced Deacon from the church that was on the site-team evaluated my growth as a worship leader. Refer to Appendix D-141.

As Spiritual Leader:

To become more spiritually disciplined in worship during the duration of my project I read two books, Merlin Carothers, *"Prison To Praise"* and Fredrick K.C. Price, D.D., *"The Holy Spirit: The Helper We All Need."* In reading *"Prison To Praise"* I was deeply touched by Carothers encounter with God and how God used him to reach others through the power of prayer. When I read Carothers' life story it was not that much different from young African-American males growing up in a single-parent home. He lost his father at the age of twelve to a heart attack. His mother was left to raise him and his two younger brothers. His question to God was "how can you do this to us?" When his mother remarried he went to live with some of his dad's old friends. Carothers tried college but that didn't work and ended up in the military. In the military on one day with nothing to do, he decided to leave the base with a friend and ended up stealing a car and robbing a store. Carothers was arrested and sentenced to five years in the Federal Penitentiary at the age of nineteen. There are so many similarities to his life with the lives of so many young African-American males. However, God did not let him serve a day in

¹³⁶ Ibid., 38.

jail. His get-out- of jail card was the military. His sentence was temporarily suspended upon his return to the military. God gave Carothers a second chance in life. So many young African-American males are also looking for second chances in life.

After leaving the military Carothers went to visit his grandparents. His grandmother told him he needed to give his life to Christ. Just like many young African-American males, Christ and church were the furthest things from his mind. Carothers was not a church person. However, he ended up going to church with his grandparents. While in service, Carothers heard a deep voice in his ear saying “tonight you need to make a decision.” That night he said God looked down on him and he was a new person. Carothers went from carefree and reckless, to wanting to know God. He went from waiting to be a lawyer to becoming a minister.

Eventually, Carothers accepted Christ and became a minister. His journey as a preacher evolved from prison ministry, to street ministry, and to military Chaplain. What was fascinating about his journey was that God used him mostly where men were located: in the prison, on the streets and in the military. Carothers also organized Saturday night men prayer groups.

What I gained from Carothers:

- When we begin to really believe, that’s when the power of God begins to break loose in our life.
- Everything that we are going through, God means it all for our good.
- Discover the praise the Bible verse that “All things work together for good to them that love the Lord.”
- Turn it over to the Lord.

- Pray without ceasing.
- In everything give thanks.
- Prayer in the spirit helps meet people's needs.
- Listen for the voice of God.

Carothers would pray with men when they felt discouraged and defeated.

A spiritual leader must have a strong prayer life.

In reading the "*Holy Spirit: the Helper We All Need*" I gained even more insight about how the Holy Spirit works. If we are truly sons of God, we will allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit. Price mentioned that "in the comfort of the Spirit especially for those of us who are in Black communities and in Black churches, we have been conditioned since the days of slavery to equate spirituality with emotionalism."¹³⁷ However, God is not an emotional God, but God is a Spirit and they that worship God must worship God in spirit and truth. One must learn to relate to God spiritually and then emotionally. We must pay close attention to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us.

- The Holy Spirit protects.
- The Holy Spirit warns.
- The Holy Spirit teaches.
- The Holy Spirit testifies.
- The Holy Spirit convicts.
- The Holy Spirit comforts.
- The Holy Spirit helps.
- The Holy Spirit reveals.

¹³⁷ Frederick K.C. Price, D.D., *The Holy Spirit: The Helper We All Need* (Los Angeles: Faith One Publishing, 1996), 10-11.

- The Holy Spirit sanctifies.
- The Holy Spirit commands.

I was able to incorporate scripture and prayer at all site team meetings and project events. God's presence was felt throughout the project. The Holy Spirit kept me from giving up. Everything that took place during the project was spiritually driven. I felt the presence of the Lord. Refer to pictures in Appendix D-207.

Evaluation Process:

An experienced Deacon from the church and a member of my site-team evaluated my growth as a worship leader. Refer to Appendix D-141 for Deacon Evaluation.

As Ecumenist:

To improve as an Ecumenist, I planned to organize one interdenominational worship service for my project. I was unable to bring an interdenominational service together because of churches schedules and unavailability of space. However, all was not lost. I did participate in two interdenominational community outreach services organized by the H.E.V.N. Coalition. Its mission is helping to end violence in Nassau County. This organization was organized by Bishop J. Raymond Mackey, Sr. of Tabernacle of Joy International Church in Uniondale, New York. It is made up of several community clusters and interdenominational church leaders around Nassau County.

On September 20, 2008, I attended H.E.V.N's annual community outreach service at Centennial Park in Roosevelt, New York and on October 4, 2008, I also attended its annual community outreach service at Hempstead Mirschel Park in Hempstead. Both events were well attended by the community and by sponsors. The official programs were from 11:00am to 12:15pm with a three minutes greeting, a statement of purpose,

followed by testimonies and recognition of government officials, and closing prayer. The day also included a 12:30pm basketball classic tournament, distribution of food and live entertainment from 12:30-4:00pm. I was able to reach out to some of the young men in attendance. The one thing that I noticed at the Roosevelt park was that there were very few young men in attendance from Sunday morning's basketball. I was very curious about these young men not in attendance. The very next day I followed up with a question to the men playing basketball in the park. Their responses were, yes they knew about H.E.V.N's Saturday event, but they did not attend because the preachers only come out once a year to get recognition for what they are doing in the community. To them the preachers were not doing much for them. Where are the preachers the rest of the year one individual asked? Another individual mentioned that I was the only one that came out to the park the entire summer. I also noticed that I was the only preacher reaching out to the young men in Hempstead during the Hempstead event. In Hempstead, I had several young men complete my questionnaire form. I went to them on the basketball courts and in the playground. However, it was easy to recognize in Hempstead that Saturday a divide between the young men in the park and the coalition. I also had on my project t-shirt with my message to the young men. One could not easily identify the men from the H.E.V.N. Coalition other than those men cooking and passing out food. This was one major weakness in the H.E.V.N. program.

Evaluation Process:

Several questionnaire forms were completed. I also established new relationships with interdenominational pastors. A few pastors completed my questionnaire form. I

reached out to a daughter of a member of my church who was at the Hempstead Park,
who now wants her son to participate.

APPENDIX A
REFLECTION LETTERS

APPENDIX A

Deacon's Letter and Evaluation

Rev. Kelvin Redmond

I Deacon John J. Simpson have been an integral part of the site team for Rev. Kelvin Redmond. As part of this site team I have observed Rev. Redmond in workshops and leading worship services. He has allowed God to use him as he ministers and leads worship services. He allowed the Lord to use him in reaching young African-American men. He is a part of the confirmation ministry allowing God to use him to reach and teach as he is lead by the Holy' Spirit. He is a spiritual leader in worship and praise service, and an anointed teacher in speaking to the new members as God speaks to him.

Yours Because of Calvary,

APPENDIX A

Reflections from Mentor/Mentee Trainer, C. Williams

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- ◆ **Date:** October 18, 2008
- ◆ **Time:** 10:00am
- ◆ **Location:** Antioch Baptist Church, **Pastor:** Rev. Dr. Phillip E. Elliott
Project in support of Rev. Kelvin Redmond, Sr.,
Doctor of Ministry Candidate at New York Theological Seminary

October 18th was a fulfilling, substantive and inspiring day. The training included both mentors and the young men who were selected to be mentees. God was surely in the midst of the training of which approximately 30 people attended. We began the day with prayer by Rev. Dr. Elliott. After that, introductions of each attendee were made. Upon reflecting on the most influential people in each person's life, we began to explore the role of a mentor.

After a role playing exercise, the conversation of dealing with family dynamics of a mentee arose. For example, the question of how a mentor should respond to a family with an absent father should be addressed. Consequently, detailed discussions were stimulated about absentee fathers, single parenthood and the ongoing battle to maintain healthy relationships with children when the mother and father are no longer together. I was pleased with how candid each participant was sharing their reflections of what each experience has taught them. As the trainer, I was also overjoyed to be a part of the beginning of the healing process for families who have experienced pain. Each person was honest and clear about ways that they can make the necessary changes in the best interest of their children.

At the end of the session, we provided Certificates of Participation. Based on the evaluations collected, it seemed that the information provided was well received. According to the pointers shared about the most effective ways to mentor young men, attendees expressed their satisfaction. Others mentioned that they would have liked the training to allow more time for questions and answers but across the board gave a favorable response.

In order to build on the momentum from this training, my hope is that there will be a follow-up to the session so that mentors can begin the official application and fingerprint process. They seemed eager and open to the many possibilities that mentor relationships represent.

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE FORMS AND RESULTS

APPENDIX B

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES THAT ATTEND CHURCH QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

*50 men completed the questionnaire.

What is influencing our young men?	strongly influence	little influence	no influence	don't know
the church	10%	44%	6%	
the media and entertainment	66%	4%	2%	
the message in rap music	72%	4%		
public policy	16%	36%	6%	10%
sports	58%	16%		2%
unemployment	44%	14%	10%	2%
financial success	58%	10%		4%
crime	50%	20%		4%
the military	8%	38%	20%	6%
gangs	68%	4%		

**My Church is having difficulty in
recruiting and maintaining young men
because:**

no programs of interest	28	56%
irrelevant teaching	7	14%
attire/dress code	17	34%
length of service too long	16	32%
Sunday sports	11	22%
peer pressure	17	34%
women dominate in the church	9	18%
adults dominate in the church	14	28%
generational conflict	11	22%
most fathers are not in the church	28	56%
service is lifeless/boring	8	16%
don't know	4	8%
other	5	10%

APPENDIX B

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES THAT ATTEND CHURCH QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

*50 men completed the questionnaire.

Which programs in your church have been effective

men's fellowship	36	72%
athletic programs	11	22%
mentoring	14	28%
education ministry	6	12%
music ministry	22	44%
Christian dating and relationship	2	4%
job training programs	8	16%
outreach ministry	15	30%
dance ministry	6	12%
media ministry	7	14%
other	3	6%
don't know	5	10%

	big problem	small problem	not a problem	don't know
HIV/AIDS	82%	2%		2%
Becoming involved in crime	82%	4%		2%
Racial discrimination	64%	18%	4%	
poverty	68%	14%		2%
being unemployed	76%	8%		
drugs and alcohol	84%	2%		
Not being responsible fathers	78%	4%	2%	2%
Not taken education seriously enough	74%	10%	2%	2%
Lack of character	62%	16%		4%

APPENDIX B

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES THAT ATTEND CHURCH QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

*50 men completed the questionnaire.

What is your church doing in terms of developing outreach?		
evangelism rallies	6	12%
revivals	18	36%
evangelism special programs	20	40%
bible study	32	64%
focus groups	11	22%
vacation Bible school	22	44%
fashions/talent shows	13	26%
picnics	19	38%
dinners	13	26%
skating		0%
parties	6	12%
counseling by ministers	12	24%
tutoring	10	20%
hospital and elder visits	12	24%
job training	6	12%
scholarship aid	18	36%
hiring of special youth and young adults	6	12%
other	1	2%
church does nothing for young men	5	10%

why do you think they leave the church?		
irrelevant teaching	21	42%
lost interest in the church	38	76%
was not saved	25	50%
no program of interest	32	64%
conflict with leadership	18	36%
college	20	40%
sports	22	44%
lifeless/boring service	18	36%
job and work responsibilities	20	40%
involvement in gangs	26	52%
family responsibilities	20	40%
no meaningful role	23	46%
troubled with the law	20	40%
generational conflict	24	48%
other	1	2%

APPENDIX B

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES THAT ATTEND CHURCH QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

*50 men completed the questionnaire.

	very important	somewhat important	not important	don't know
A tithing church	40%	30%	10%	2%
Afrocentric teaching	32%	24%	16%	
Separate classes for men and women	18%	18%	40%	
More sports activities	8%	44%	24%	
Male preachers only	10%	16%	48%	2%
Men in leadership	40%	30%	14%	
easy access to the pastor	50%	24%	10%	
A mentorship ministry	44%	26%		2%
job/survival skill training	40%	32%	6%	
community outreach	52%	28%		
young adult ministries	58%	24%	2%	

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>%</u>
never been married	13	26%
married	29	58%
divorced	4	8%
separated	0	0%
widowed	3	6%
16-24	9	18%
25-35	1	2%
36-45	13	26%
46-55	9	18%
56-65	7	14%
over 65	11	22%
no children	15	30%
have children	35	70%
raised all of your children	31	62%
Did not raised all of my children	4	8%
Have sons only	5	10%
Have daughters only	8	16%
Both sons and daughters	22	44%
spouse attend same church	25	50%
spouse don't attend same church	3	6%

APPENDIX B

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES THAT ATTEND CHURCH QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

*50 men completed the questionnaire.

**Do you think America's economic system
(is stack against African American males),
or do you think the system is:**

Fair to everyone	8	16%
Not fair to everyone	39	78%
Don't know	3	6%

**Do you think African American males
generally put too much emphasis on:**

education	1	2%
sports	33	66%
families	1	2%
health	2	4%
getting ahead at work	1	2%
sex	37	74%
image	39	78%

**Do you think African American males
generally put too little emphasis on:**

education	44	88%
sports	6	12%
families	36	72%
health	35	70%
getting ahead at work	32	64%
sex	1	2%
image	1	2%

**Do you live in the community
where you attend church?**

Yes	28	56%
No	20	40%
Don't know	2	4%
church in walking distance	8	16%
less than 1 mile from church	5	10%
1-5 miles from church	22	44%
6-10 miles from church	5	10%
more than 10 miles from church	9	18%
sons in church	16	32%
sons not in church	6	12%
not all sons in church	4	8%
don't know if sons are in church	0	0%
in same church	13	26%
another church	8	16%

APPENDIX B

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES THAT ATTEND CHURCH QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

*50 men completed the questionnaire.

**Does church have difficulty in
recruiting and maintaining males
ages 16-24?**

A lot	12	24%
Some difficulty	24	48%
A little difficulty	4	8%
NO DIFFICULTY	1	2%
Don't know	8	16%

Growing up:

Live with both parents	27	54%
Mother only	14	28%
Father only	0	0%
Grandparents or other relative	3	6%
Mother and stepfather	6	12%
Father and stepmother	0	0%
Adopted parents	1	2%
Someone else	0	0%

Did you grow up in:

The South	22	44%
The Northeast	24	48%
The North-central	1	2%
The Midwest	0	0%
The West coast	1	2%
Somewhere else	3	6%

Highest education achievement:

Grade school	1	2%
High School	22	44%
College Graduate	14	28%
Grad School	6	12%

**For African American men as a group
do you think things are:**

Getting better	9	18%
Getting worse	31	62%
About the same	7	14%
Don't know	3	6%

**For an African American male in
America today do you think it is a:**

Good time	24	48%
Bad time	11	22%
Neither	7	14%
Don't know	8	16%

APPENDIX B

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES THAT ATTEND CHURCH QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

50 men completed the questionnaire.

Which of these is the single biggest problem facing African American males today?

HIV/AIDS	9	18%
Becoming involved in crime	12	24%
Racial discrimination	3	6%
poverty	1	2%
being unemployed	6	12%
drugs and alcohol	2	4%
Not being responsible fathers	2	4%
Not taken education seriously enough	7	14%
Lack of character	3	6%
Don't know	1	2%

APPENDIX B

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES THAT DON'T ATTEND ANY CHURCH QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

*47 men completed the questionnaire.

- 51% (24/47) left church before the age of twenty.
- 49% (23/47) were a member in a church before.
- 15% (7/47) stop going to church because they were not saved.
- 21% (10/47) stop going to church because they lost interest in the church
- 25% (12/47) stop going to church for other reasons.
- 6% (3/47) stop going to church because service was boring.
- 4% (2/47) stop going to church because no program of interest.
- 4% (2/47) stop going to church because they relocated.
- 6% (3/47) stop going to church because of conflict with leadership.
- 4% (2/47) stop going to church because disagreement with someone.
- 55% (26/47) at one time attend church on a regular basis (once or twice a month)
- 55% (26/47) lived with mother only
- 40% (19/47) lived with both parents
- 23% (11/47) lived with grandparents or other relative
- 4% (2/47) lived with adopted parents
- 2% (1/47) lived with mother and stepfather
- 4% (2/47) lived with father only
- 2% (1/47) lived with father and stepmother
- 66% (31/47) African-American males generally put too much emphasis on sports
- 68% (32/47) African-American males generally put too much emphasis on sex
- 68% (32/47) African-American males generally put too much emphasis on image
- 78% (37/47) African-American males generally put too little emphasis on education
- 68% (32/47) African-American males generally put too little emphasis on family
- 66% (31/47) African-American males generally put too little emphasis on health
- 61% (29/47) African-American males generally put too little emphasis on getting ahead
- 89% (42/47) felt that HIV/AIDS is a big problem for them
- 93% (44/47) felt that becoming involved in crime is a big problem for African-American males
- 72% (34/47) felt that racial discrimination is a big problem for African-American males
- 81% (38/47) felt that poverty is a big problem for African-American males
- 92% (43/47) felt that being unemployed is a big problem for African-American males
- 89% (42/47) felt that drugs and alcohol is a big problem for African-American males
- 87% (41/47) felt that not being a responsible father is a big problem for African-American males.
- 91% (43/47) felt that young men not taken their education seriously enough is a big problem for African-American males.
- 72% (34/47) felt that young men lack of character is a big problem for African-American males.
- 30% (14/47) felt that church is strongly influencing our young men.

APPENDIX B

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES THAT DON'T ATTEND ANY CHURCH QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

*47 men completed the questionnaire.

72% (34/47) felt that media and entertainment is strongly influencing our young men
64% (30/47) felt that the message in rap music is strongly influencing our young men
19% (9/47) felt that public policy is strongly influencing our young men
81% (38/47) felt that sports is strongly influencing our young men
62% (29/47) felt that unemployment is strongly influencing our young men.
60% (28/47) felt that financial success is strongly influencing our young men
64% (30/47) felt that crime is strongly influencing our young men
28% (13/47) felt that the military is strongly influencing our young men
72% (34/47) felt that gangs are strongly influencing our young men
57% (27/47) felt that church has little or no influence over our young men
17% (8/47) felt that the media and entertainment have little or no influence over our young men
23% (11/47) felt that the message in rap music have little or no influence over our young men.
66% (31/47) felt that public policy has little or no influence over our young men.
13% (6/47) felt that sports has little or no influence over our young men
23% (11/47) felt that unemployment has little or no influence over our young men
23% (11/47) felt that financial success has little or no influence over our young men.
19% (9/47) felt that crime has little or no influence over our young men
43% (20/47) felt that the military has little or no influence over our young men
19% (9/47) felt that gangs have little or no influence over our young men
23% (11/47) were in church in the last 6 months
15% (7/47) were in church 6 months to a year ago.
26% (12/47) were in church one to three years ago.
32% (15/47) have not been to church in over 3 years
58% (27/47) have not been to church in over one year.
23% (11/47) were ages 16-24
19% (8/47) were ages 25-34
30% (14/47) were ages 35-44
21% (10/47) were ages 45-54
66% (31/47) finished high school
19% (8/47) completed college
2% (1/47) completed grad school
4% (2/47) completed grade school only
4% (2/47) had their GED
2% (1/47) completed trade school
36% (17/47) felt things are getting better for African-American males
49% (23/47) felt things are getting worse for African-American males
11% (5/47) felt things are staying about the same.

APPENDIX B

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES THAT DON'T ATTEND ANY CHURCH QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

***47 men completed the questionnaire.**

4% (2/47) felt they don't know if things are getting better or worse.

51% (24/47) felt it is a good time to be an African-American male in American today.

21% (10/47) felt it is a bad time to be an African-American male in American today.

17% (6/47) felt it is neither a good or bad time to be an African-American male today.

6% (3/47) felt they don't know if it is a good or bad time to be an African-American male in America today.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For African-American Males Attending Church

This questionnaire is being conducted by a doctoral student of New York Theological Seminary. The purpose of this research is to discover how traditional churches around Hempstead and Nassau County relate to African-American males between the ages of 16-24. Your time is greatly appreciated. Your responses will be kept confidential.

CHURCH AND LOCATION:

1. As a male attending church, please rate the following **responsibilities of a pastor** on a scale 1-10 according to their importance to you. 10=most important 1=least important

Preaching _____ Teaching _____ Worship leader _____
Administrator _____ Community leader _____ Counselor _____
Spiritual leader _____ Theologian _____ Business Manager _____

2. Do you attend a church with:

Fewer than 150 members _____ 150 to 399 members _____
400 to 699 members _____ 700 to 1499 members _____
1500 or more members _____

3. Does your church have any difficulty in recruiting and maintaining African-American males between ages 16-24?

A lot of difficulty _____ Some difficulty _____ A little difficulty _____
Don't know _____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For African-American Males Attending Church

3 a. What do you feel are the reasons why your church have difficulty in recruiting and maintaining African American males between ages 16-24 (check all that apply)?

No programs of interest _____ Irrelevant teaching _____ Attire/Dress Code _____

Length of Service (too long) _____ Sunday sports _____ Peer Pressure _____

Women dominate in the church _____ Generational conflict _____

Adults dominate in the church _____ Most fathers are not in church _____

Service is lifeless/boring _____ Don't know _____ Other (explain) _____

4. Which programs in your church have been effective in reaching African-American males of all ages (**Check all that apply**)?

Men's Fellowship _____ Athletic programs _____ Mentoring _____

Christian dating and relationship _____ Music ministry _____

Education ministry _____ Job training programs _____ Outreach ministry _____

Dance ministry _____ Media ministry _____ Other _____ Don't know _____

5. What is the church doing in terms of developing outreach programs for African American males ages 16-24(**Check all that apply**)?

a. Evangelism:

Rallies _____ revivals _____ special services _____

b. Educational programs:

Bible study _____ Focus groups _____ Vacation Bible school _____

c. Social programs:

Fashion/talent shows _____ picnics _____ dinners _____ Skating parties _____

d. Counseling by minister _____

e. Community service oriented programs:

Tutoring _____ visit hospitals/elders _____ Job training _____

f. Scholarship aid _____

g. Hiring of special youth and young adult minister _____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For African-American Males Attending Church

h. Other (explain) _____

i. Church does nothing for young African-American males _____

6. On a scale of 1-14 why do you think African-American males between the ages of 16-24 leave the church? 1=the main reason 14=lesser of a reason

Irrelevant teachings _____ Lost interest in the church _____ Was not saved _____

No program of interest _____ Conflict with leadership _____ College _____

Sports _____ Lifeless/boring services _____ Job/Work responsibilities _____

Involvement in gangs _____ Family responsibilities _____ No meaningful role _____

Troubled with the law _____ Generational Conflict _____

7. For each of the following, please tell me as an African-American male attending church what is very important, somewhat important, or not important about a church you will consider attending?

	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not Important</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
a. A tithing church	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Afrocentric teaching	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Separate classes for men and women	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. More sports activities	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Male preachers only	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Men in leadership	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Easy access to the pastor	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. A mentorship ministry	_____	_____	_____	_____
i. Job/Survival skill training	_____	_____	_____	_____
j. Community outreach	_____	_____	_____	_____
k. Young adult ministries	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For African-American Males Attending Church

- 8a. Do you live in the community where you attend church?
Yes _____ No _____ Don't know _____
- 8b. How far do you travel from home to reach your church?
Walking distance _____ Less than 1 mile _____ 1-5 miles _____
6-10 miles _____ More than 10 miles _____
9. What is your marital status?
Never been married _____ Married _____ Divorced _____
Separated _____ Widowed _____
10. If married, does your spouse attend the same church?
Yes _____ No _____ Not married _____
11. What is your age?
16-24 _____ 25-35 _____ 36-45 _____
46-55 _____ 56-65 _____ Over 65 _____
12. Do you have children?
Yes _____ No _____
13. Did you raise all of your children?
Yes _____ No _____
- 14a. If yes, how many children do you have?
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 or more _____
- 14b. (Fill in the blank). How many sons? _____ How many daughters? _____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For African-American Males Attending Church

Questions for Males with Sons:

15. What are the ages of your son(s)?
Under 16 _____ 16-24 _____ 25-35 _____ Over 35 _____
16. (Fill in the blank). How many sons currently live with you? _____
17. Are your son(s) in church?
No son(s) in church _____ Son(s) in church _____
Not all sons in church _____ don't know _____
18. If yes?
In my church _____
Another church _____

Questions about your life:

19. Growing up, did you live with both parents, with your mother only, with your father only, or with someone else?
Both parents _____ Mother only _____ Father only _____
Grandparents or other relative _____ Mother and stepfather _____
Father and stepmother _____ Adopted parents _____
Someone else _____
20. Did you grow up in the South, Northeast, Midwest, West, or some where else?
The South _____ The Northeast _____ The North-central _____
The Midwest _____ The West _____ Some where else _____
21. What is your highest education achievement?
Grade school _____ High School _____ College Graduate _____
Grad School _____.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For African-American Males Attending Church

Now I am going to ask you questions about African-American males

22. Regardless of how they are doing now, do you think things are (getting better) for African-American men as a group, (getting worse), or staying about the same compared to twenty years ago?

Getting better _____ Getting worse _____ About the same _____
Don't know _____

23. Considering everything, do you think it is a (good time) or a (bad time) to be an African-American male in America today?

Good time _____ Bad time _____ Neither _____ Don't know _____

24. Do you think African-American males generally put (too much) emphasis, (too little) emphasis on the following?

	<u>Too much</u>	<u>Too Little</u>	<u>About Right</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. Education	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Sports	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Their families	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Their health	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Getting ahead at work	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Sex	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Image (being tough)	_____	_____	_____	_____

25. Do you feel African-American males face (more obstacles) or (fewer obstacles) advancing in the workplace than Whites and African-American women?

	<u>More</u>	<u>Fewer</u>	<u>The same</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. White men	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. White women	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. African-American women	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For African-American Males Attending Church

26. For each of the following, please tell me whether you think it is a big problem, a small problem or not a problem for African-American males?

	<u>Big Problem</u>	<u>Small Problem</u>	<u>Not a Problem</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
a. HIV/AIDS	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Becoming involved in crime	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Racial discrimination	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Poverty	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Being unemployed	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Drugs and alcohol	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Not being responsible fathers	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. Young men not taken their education seriously enough	_____	_____	_____	_____
i. Lack of character	_____	_____	_____	_____

27. If you had to pick one, which of these would you say is the single biggest problem facing African-American males today?

a. HIV/AIDS	_____
b. Becoming involved in crime	_____
c. Racial discrimination	_____
d. Poverty	_____
e. Being unemployed	_____
f. Drugs and alcohol	_____
g. Not being responsible fathers	_____
h. Young men not taken their education seriously enough	_____
i. Lack of character	_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For African-American Males Attending Church

28. Do you think the problems facing African-American males are more a result of what (white people have done to African-American males), or more of what (African-American males have failed to do for themselves)?

What whites people have done _____ What African- American males have failed to do _____ Both equally _____ Neither _____ Don't know _____

29. Do you think America's economic system is (stacked against African-American males), or do you think the system is (fair to everyone)?

Fair to everyone _____ Not fair to everyone _____ Don't know _____

30. According to government statistics, the average African-American female is better educated and makes more money than the average African-American male. For each, tell me if you think this is a big reason for that difference, a small reason, or not a reason.

Big reason Small reason Not a reason Don't know

a. Whites are more comfortable

with African-American women _____

b. African-American women work harder

than African-American men _____

c. There is more discrimination

against African-American men _____

d. African-American women are less

likely to have a criminal record _____

31a. Do you think most African-American males do or do not show proper respect for their African-American women?

Do show proper respect _____ Do not show proper respect _____

Don't know _____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For African-American Males Attending Church

31b. Is this a serious problem?

A serious problem _____ Somewhat serious problem _____

Not too serious a problem _____ Not a serious problem at all _____

32. As you may know, young African-American males have a higher chance than most people of winding up in jail. For each, tell me whether you think it is a big reason, a small reason, or not a reason why this is true:

	<u>Big Reason</u>	<u>Small Reason</u>	<u>Not a Reason</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. More African-American males grow up in poverty	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. African-American males are less likely to think committing crime is wrong	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Police are more likely to target African-American males than white males	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Courts are more likely to convict African-American males than white males	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Many black parents aren't teaching their children right from wrong	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. African-American males have fewer job opportunities	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Schools are failing African-American males	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For African-American Males Attending Church

33. Does race still matter in America?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't know _____

34. What is strongly influencing our young African-American males and having a (more) or (a lesser) impact on them?

	<u>Strongly Influence</u>	<u>Little Influence</u>	<u>No Influence</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. The church	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. The media and entertainment	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. The message in music (Rap)	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Public policy	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Sports	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Unemployment	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Financial success	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. Crime	_____	_____	_____	_____
i..The military	_____	_____	_____	_____
j. Gangs	_____	_____	_____	_____

35. Here are explanations some people give why fewer and fewer African-Americans are getting married these days. For each, tell me if you think it is a big reason, a small reason, or not a reason, why African Americans marriage rate is declining.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For African-American Males Attending Church

	<u>Big Reason</u>	<u>Small Reason</u>	<u>Not a Reason</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. Many African-American men don't feel they can support a family financially	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Many African-American men are less likely to value marriage	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. African-American women are reluctant to marry men who have less education and lower incomes than they do	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Too many young African-American men are in prison or have been killed	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

For African-American Males Not Attending Church

This questionnaire is being conducted by a doctoral student of New York Theological Seminary. The purpose of this research is to discover how traditional churches around Hempstead and Nassau County relate to African-American males ages 16-24. Your time is greatly appreciated. Your responses will be kept confidential.

1. Have you ever attended church on a regular basis? (i.e., once or twice a month)

_____ Yes _____ No

2. a. Have you ever been a member of a Christian church?

_____ Yes _____ No

If Yes:

- b. What was the denomination?

_____ Baptist _____ Pentecostal

_____ Catholic _____ Methodist

_____ AME _____ Other

- c. Why did you stop attending church on a regular basis? (Check all that apply)

_____ Irrelevant teachings _____ Lost interest in church

_____ Conflict with leadership _____ Disagreement with someone

_____ Found services to be lifeless/boring

_____ Was not saved

_____ Relocated & could not find a home church

_____ No programs of interest

_____ Other (Please explain) _____

- d. How old were you when you stopped attending church? _____

- e. Did you participate in any church ministries? If yes, which ones?

_____ Men's Ministry _____ Single' Ministry

_____ Choir _____ Sunday School

_____ Music Ministry _____ Youth Ministry

APPENDIX B
Questionnaire
For African-American Males Not Attending Church

- _____ Media Ministry _____ Outreach Ministry
 _____ Other, please specify _____
3. If the answer to #2 is "No", what has influenced you not to attend church?
 _____ No family influence/encouragement
 _____ Feel the church is irrelevant
 _____ Bad experience with church people
 _____ Never made time
 _____ Other, specify _____

4. a. When was the last time you attended church?
 _____ 0-6 months _____ 6 months to 1 year
 _____ 1-3 years _____ 3 + years
 What was the reason?
 _____ Christmas _____ Easter
 _____ Mother's Day _____ New Year's Eve
 _____ Father's Day _____ Friend's invitation
 _____ Other (Please Explain) _____
5. If you did regularly attend church, what influence you to do so?
 _____ Relatives _____ Friends
 _____ Church Programs _____ Leadership Style
 _____ Social environment _____ Single Females
 _____ Other, specify _____

APPENDIX B
Questionnaire
For African-American Males Not Attending Church

6. A church that I will consistently attend should have the following:

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
No Eurocentric Bible Images	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Strong Male Leadership	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Structure programs that reach African-American males	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Training for job and survival skills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Competitive sports programs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Exciting gospel choirs/music	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Strong Biblical teaching	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Atmosphere for asking biblical questions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Easy access to the pastor	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Single Females	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (Please describe)	_____				

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

For African-American Males Not Attending Church

7. What social factors, if any, do you believe prevent many young African-American males from attending church?

Questions about your life:

8. Growing up, did you live with both parents, with your mother only, with your father only, or with someone else?

Both parents _____ Mother only _____ Father only _____
Grandparents or other relative _____ Mother and stepfather _____
Father and stepmother _____ Adopted parents _____
Someone else _____

9. Did you grow up in the South, Northeast, Midwest, West, or some where else?

The South _____ The Northeast _____ The North-central _____
The Midwest _____ The West _____ Some where else _____

10. What is your highest education achievement?

Grade school _____ High School _____ College Graduate _____
Grad School _____

11. In my family, I am/was closest to my (check only one)

_____ Mother _____ Father _____ Brother
_____ Sister _____ Aunt _____ Uncle
_____ Grandparent _____ Other

12. My most important role model is: (Check one only)

_____ Parent _____ Friend _____ Pastor _____ Relative
_____ Teacher/Coach/Educator _____ Other

APPENDIX B
Questionnaire
For African-American Males Not Attending Church

13. Please indicate the sex of the role model specified in Question # 12

_____ Male _____ Female

14. Are you..... a. _____ Employed _____ Unemployed
b. _____ Student _____ Non-student

15. What is your age? _____

16. Do you have children?

_____ Yes _____ No

If Yes, list their sexes and ages:

b. Do you encourage your children to go to church?

_____ Yes _____ No

If "No", Please Explain

c. Would you be willing to attend church in order to set an example for your children?

_____ Yes _____ No

d. Are you married? _____ Yes _____ No _____ Divorced / Separated

Now I am going to ask you questions about African-American males

17. Regardless of how they are doing now, do you think things are (getting better) for African-American men as a group, (getting worse), or staying about the same compared to twenty years ago?

Getting better _____ Getting worse _____ About the same _____

Don't know _____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

For African-American Males Not Attending Church

18. Considering everything, do you think it is a (good time) or a (bad time) to be an African-American male in America today?

Good time _____ Bad time _____ Neither _____ Don't know _____

19. Do you think African-American males generally put (too much) emphasis, (too little) emphasis on the following?

	<u>Too much</u>	<u>Too Little</u>	<u>About Right</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. Education	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Sports	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Their families	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Their health	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Getting ahead at work	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Sex	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Image (being tough)	_____	_____	_____	_____

20. Do you feel African-American males face (more obstacles) or (fewer obstacles) advancing in the workplace than Whites and African-American women?

	<u>More</u>	<u>Fewer</u>	<u>The same</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. White men	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. White women	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. African-American women	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

For African-American Males Not Attending Church

21. For each of the following, please tell me whether you think it is a big problem, a small problem or not a problem for African-American males?

	<u>Big Problem</u>	<u>Small Problem</u>	<u>Not a Problem</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
a. HIV/AIDS	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Becoming involved in crime	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Racial discrimination	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Poverty	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Being unemployed	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Drugs and alcohol	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Not being responsible fathers	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. Young men not taken their education seriously enough	_____	_____	_____	_____
i. Lack of character	_____	_____	_____	_____

22. If you had to pick one, which of these would you say is the single biggest problem facing African-American males today?

a. HIV/AIDS	_____
b. Becoming involved in crime	_____
c. Racial discrimination	_____
d. Poverty	_____
e. Being unemployed	_____
f. Drugs and alcohol	_____
g. Not being responsible fathers	_____
h. Young men not taken their education seriously enough	_____
i. Lack of character	_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

For African-American Males Not Attending Church

23. Do you think the problems facing African-American males are more a result of what (white people have done to African-American males), or more of what (African-American males have failed to do for themselves)?

What whites people have done _____ What African- American males have failed to do _____ Both equally _____ Neither _____ Don't know _____

24. Do you think America's economic system is (stacked against African-American males), or do you think the system is (fair to everyone)?

Fair to everyone _____ Not fair to everyone _____ Don't know _____

25. According to government statistics, the average African-American female is better educated and makes more money than the average African-American male. For each, tell me if you think this is a big reason for that difference, a small reason, or not a reason.

Big reason Small reason Not a reason Don't know

a. Whites are more comfortable
with African-American women _____

b. African-American women work harder
than African-American men _____

c. There is more discrimination
against African-American men _____

d. African-American women are less
likely to have a criminal record _____

26a. Do you think most African-American males do or do not show proper respect for their African-American women?

Do show proper respect _____ Do not show proper respect _____

Don't know _____

APPENDIX B
Questionnaire
For African-American Males Not Attending Church

26b. Is this a serious problem?

A serious problem _____ Somewhat serious problem _____

Not too serious a problem _____ Not a serious problem at all _____

27. As you may know, young African-American males have a higher chance than most people of winding up in jail. For each, tell me whether you think it is a big reason, a small reason, or not a reason why this is true:

	<u>Big Reason</u>	<u>Small Reason</u>	<u>Not a Reason</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. More African-American males grow up in poverty	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. African-American males are less likely to think committing crime is wrong	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Police are more likely to target African-American males than white males	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Courts are more likely to convict African-American males than white males	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Many black parents aren't teaching their children right from wrong	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. African-American males have fewer job opportunities	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Schools are failing African-American males	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B
Questionnaire
For African-American Males Not Attending Church

28. Does race still matter in America?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't know _____

29. What is strongly influencing our young African-American males and having a (more) or (a lesser) impact on them?

	<u>Strongly Influence</u>	<u>Little Influence</u>	<u>No Influence</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. The church	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. The media and entertainment	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. The message in music (Rap)	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Public policy	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Sports	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Unemployment	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Financial success	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. Crime	_____	_____	_____	_____
i..The military	_____	_____	_____	_____
j. Gangs	_____	_____	_____	_____

30. Here are explanations some people give why fewer and fewer African-Americans are getting married these days. For each, tell me if you think it is a big reason, a small reason, or not a reason, why African Americans marriage rate is declining.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

For African-American Males Not Attending Church

	<u>Big Reason</u>	<u>Small Reason</u>	<u>Not a Reason</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. Many African-American men don't feel they can support a family financially	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Many African-American men are less likely to value marriage	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. African-American women are reluctant to marry men who have less education and lower incomes than they do	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Too many young African-American men are in prison or have been killed	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For Pastors

This questionnaire is being conducted by a doctoral student of New York Theological Seminary. The purpose of this research is to discover how traditional churches around Hempstead and Nassau County relate to African-American males between the ages of 16-24. Your time is greatly appreciated. Your responses will be kept confidential.

1. As pastor, please rank the following responsibilities on a scale 1-8 according to their important to you. 1=most important 8=least important

Preaching _____ Teaching _____ Worship leader _____
Administrator _____ Community leadership _____ Counselor _____
Spiritual leader _____ Theologian _____

2. Do you pastor a church with:

Fewer than 150 members _____ 150 to 399 members _____
400 to 699 members _____ 700 to 1499 members _____
1500 or more members _____

3. Does your church have any difficulty in recruiting and maintaining African-American males between the ages 16-24?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't know _____

- 3 a. If yes, what do you feel is the main reason why your church has difficulty in recruiting and maintaining African American males between the ages 16-24?

No programs of interest _____ Irrelevant teachings _____
Adults dominate in the church _____ Services are lifeless/boring _____
Women dominate in the church _____ A lack of men in leadership _____
Most fathers are not in the church _____ Their voices are not heard in church _____
No chance to participate in a meaningful way _____ Generational conflict _____
Other _____ Don't know _____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For Pastors

4. What program in your church has been affective in reaching African-American males between the ages 16-24?

Men's Fellowship _____ Athletic programs _____ Mentoring _____

Christian dating and relationship _____ Music ministry _____

Education ministry _____ Job training programs _____ Outreach ministry _____

Dance ministry _____ Media ministry _____ Other _____ Don't know _____

5. What is the church doing in term of developing outreach programs for African American males ages 16-24?

a. Evangelism:

Rallies _____ revivals _____ special services _____

b. Educational programs:

Bible study _____ Focus groups _____ Vacation Bible school _____

c. Social programs:

Fashion/talent shows _____ picnics _____ dinners _____ Skating parties _____

d. Counseling by minister _____

e. Community service oriented programs:

Tutoring _____ visit hospitals/elders _____ Job training _____

f. Scholarship aid _____

g. Hiring of special youth and young adult minister _____

h. Other (explain) _____

i. Church does nothing for young African-American males _____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For Pastors

6. Why do you think African-American males between the ages of 16-24 leave the church?

Irrelevant teachings _____ Lost interest in the church _____ Was not saved _____
No program of interest _____ Conflict with leadership _____ Relocated _____
Lifeless/boring services _____ Disagreement with someone _____ College _____
Job/Work responsibilities _____ Family responsibilities _____
Don't know _____ Other (explain) _____

7. Of the African-American males who left your church between the ages 16-24, do they return later in life?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't know _____

8. In the past five years, how many African-American males between the ages 16-24 from your church have decided to enter the ministry?

1-3 _____ 4-6 _____ more than 6 _____ d. none _____ Don't know _____

9. Do you live in the community where you pastor?

Yes _____ No _____

9a. How far do you travel from home to reach your church?

Walking distance _____ Less than 1 mile _____ 1-5 miles _____
6-10 miles _____ More than 10 miles _____

10. What is your marital status?

Never been married _____ Married _____ Divorced _____
Separated _____ Widowed _____

11. If married, does your spouse attend the church you pastor?

Yes _____ No _____ Not married _____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For Pastors

12. What is your age?
Under 25 _____ 25-35 _____ 36-45 _____
46-55 _____ 56-65 _____ Over 65 _____
13. Do you have children?
Yes _____ No _____
14. If yes, how many children do you have?
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 4+ _____
- 14a. Sons only _____ Daughters only _____
Both, sons and daughters _____
- 14b. (Fill in the blank). How many sons? _____ How many daughters? _____
15. (Fill in the blank). How many are those children are under age 16? _____
16. (Fill in the blank). How many currently live with you? _____
17. Did you raise all of your children?
Yes _____ No _____
18. Are you a full-time pastor?
Yes _____ No _____
19. If no, do you work full-time or part-time outside the church that you pastor?
Work full-time _____ Work part-time _____ Don't work _____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For Pastors

20. Does your spouse work full-time or part-time outside the church?
Spouse work full-time _____ Spouse work part-time _____
Spouse does not work _____
20. a. Are you male or female?
Male _____ Female _____
21. Growing up, did you live with both parents, with your mother only, with your father only, or with someone else?
Both parents _____ Mother only _____ Father only _____
Grandparents or other relatives _____ Mother and stepfather _____
Father and stepmother _____ Adopted parents _____
Someone else _____
22. Did you grow up in the South, Northeast, Midwest, West, or some where else?
The South _____ The Northeast _____ The North-central _____
The Midwest _____ The West _____ Some where else _____

Questions for Pastors with Sons:

23. Are your son(s) in church?
No son(s) in church _____ Son(s) in church _____
Not all sons in church _____ Don't know _____
- 23a. If yes?
The same church _____
Another church _____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For Pastors

Now I am going to ask you questions about African-American males

24. Regardless of how they are doing now, do you think things are (getting better) for African-American men as a group, (getting worse), or staying about the same?

Getting better _____ Getting worse _____ About the same _____

Don't know _____

25. Considering everything, do you think it is a (good time) or a (bad time) to be an African-American male in America?

Good time _____ Bad time _____ Neither _____ Don't know _____

26. Do you think what happens generally to African-American males in this country will have something to do with what happens in your own life?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't know _____

27. Do you think African-American males generally put (too much) emphasis, (too little) emphasis on (INSERT)?

	<u>Too much</u>	<u>Too Little</u>	<u>About Right</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. Education	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Sports	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Their families	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Their health	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Getting ahead at work	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Sex	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Image (being tough)	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For Pastors

28. Do you feel African-American males face (more obstacles) or (fewer obstacles) advancing in the workplace than Whites and African-American women?

	<u>More</u>	<u>Fewer</u>	<u>The same</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. Whites	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. African-American women	_____	_____	_____	_____

29. For each of the following, please tell me whether you think it is a big problem, a small problem or not a problem for African-American males?

	<u>Big Problem</u>	<u>Small Problem</u>	<u>Not a Problem</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
a. HIV/AIDS	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Becoming involved in crime	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Racial discrimination	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Poverty	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Being unemployed	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Drugs and alcohol	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Not being responsible fathers	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. Young men not taken their education seriously enough	_____	_____	_____	_____
i. Lack of character	_____	_____	_____	_____

30. If you had to pick one, which of these would you say is the single biggest problem facing African-American males today?

a. HIV/AIDS	_____
b. Becoming involved in crime	_____
c. Racial discrimination	_____
d. Poverty	_____
e. Being unemployed	_____
f. Drugs and alcohol	_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For Pastors

- g. Not being responsible fathers _____
- h. Young men not taken their
education seriously enough _____
- i. Lack of character _____

31. Do you think the problems facing African-American males are more a result of what (white people have done to African-American males), or more of what (African-American males have failed to do for themselves)?

What whites people have done _____ What African- American males have failed to do _____ Both equally _____ Neither _____ Don't know _____

32. Do you think America's economic system is (stacked against African-American males), or do you think the system is (fair to everyone)?

Stacked against African-American males _____ Fair to everyone _____
Not fair to everyone _____ Neither _____ Other _____
Don't know _____

33. According to government statistics, the average African-American female is better educated and makes more money that the average African-American male. For each, tell me if you think this is a big reason for that difference, a small reason, or not a reason.

	<u>Big reason</u>	<u>Small reason</u>	<u>Not a reason</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
a. Whites are more comfortable with African-American women	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. African-American women work harder than African-American men	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. There is more discrimination against African-American men	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For Pastors

d. African-American women are less
likely to have a criminal record _____

34. Do you think most African-American males do or do not show proper respect for
their African-American women?

Do show proper respect _____ Do not show proper respect _____
Don't know _____

34 a. Is this a serious problem _____ Somewhat serious problem _____
Not too serious a problem _____ Not a serious problem at all _____

35. As you may know, young African-American males have a higher chance than
most people of winding up in jail. For each, tell me whether you think it is a big reason, a
small reason, or not a reason why this is true:

	<u>Big Reason</u>	<u>Small Reason</u>	<u>Not a Reason</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. More African-American males grow up in poverty	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. African-American males are less likely to think committing crime is wrong	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Police are more likely to target African-American males than white males	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Courts are more likely to convict African-American males than white males	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Many black parents aren't teaching their children right from wrong	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For Pastors

f. African-American males have fewer job opportunities

g. Schools are failing African-American males

36. Does race still matter in America?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't know _____

37. If the church is not strongly influencing our young African-American males then what is having a (more) or (a lesser) impact on them?

	<u>Strongly Influence</u>	<u>Little Influence</u>	<u>No Influence</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. The media and entertainment	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. The message in music (Rap)	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Public policy	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Sports	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Unemployment	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Financial success	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Crime	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. The military	_____	_____	_____	_____
i. Gangs	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For Pastors

38. Here are explanations some people give why fewer and fewer African-Americans are getting married these days. For each, tell me if you think it is a big reason, a small reason, or not a reason, why African Americans marriage rate is declining.

	<u>Big Reason</u>	<u>Small Reason</u>	<u>Not a Reason</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. Many African-American men don't feel they can support a family financially	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Many African-American men are less likely to value marriage	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. African-American women are reluctant to marry men who have less education and lower incomes than they do	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Too many young African-American men are in prison or have been killed	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

LECTURE EVALUATION FORM

**REACHING AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES AGES 16-24
LECTURE ON REACHING GENERATION X
AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES AGES 16-24
EVALUATION FORM
10-Jul-08**

CHECK ONE

OUTSTANDING	VERY GOOD	GOOD	BELOW NORMAL	UNACCEPTABLE

a. Evaluation of Moderator

- 1 Knowledgeable about subject matter?
- 2 Aware of the condition of African American males ages 16-24?
- 3 Shared new information on the condition of African American males 16-24 that you were not aware of?
- 4 Information were relevant to subject matter?
- 5 Made you more aware of the need to reach African American males ages 16-24?
- 6 Made you more aware on how to reach them?
- 7 How would you rate the lecture and training section overall.

c. Conclusion

- 1 Did you like the format of this lecture?
- 2 Would you attend another lecture discussion on this subject matter in the future?
- 3 Are you a member of a local church?
- 4 Would you like to get involved in reaching and mentoring African American males ages 16-24?
- 5 If Yes? Please give name and contact information Below.

Name: _____
Phone #: _____
E-mail address: _____

Check One

Yes	No

APPENDIX B

PANEL DISCUSSION EVALUATION FORM

REACHING AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES AGES 16-24
PANEL DISCUSSION
EVALUATION FORM
17-May-08

CHECK ONE

[illegible]

a. Evaluation of Moderator

- 1 Knowledgeable about subject matter.
- 2 Aware of the condition of African American males ages 16-24?
- 3 Shared new information on the condition of African American males 16-24 that you were not aware of.
- 4 Questions were relevant to subject matter.
- 5 Made you more aware of the need to reach African American males ages 16-24.

b. Evaluation of Panelist (Speakers)

- 1 Knowledgeable about subject matter.
- 2 Aware of the condition of African American males ages 16-24?
- 3 Shared new information on the condition of African American males 16-24 that you were not aware of.
- 4 Answers were relevant to the questions asked?
- 5 Were compassionate about the work they are doing in the community.
- 6 Made you more aware of the need to reach African American males ages 16-24.

c. Conclusion

- 1 Did you like the format of this discussion?
- 2 Would you attend another panel discussion on this subject matter in the future?
- 3 Are you a member of a local church?
- 4 Would you like to get involved in reaching and mentoring African American males ages 16-24?
- 5 If Yes? Please give name and contact information Below.

Check	One
Yes	No

Name: _____
Phone #: _____
E-mail address: _____

APPENDIX C

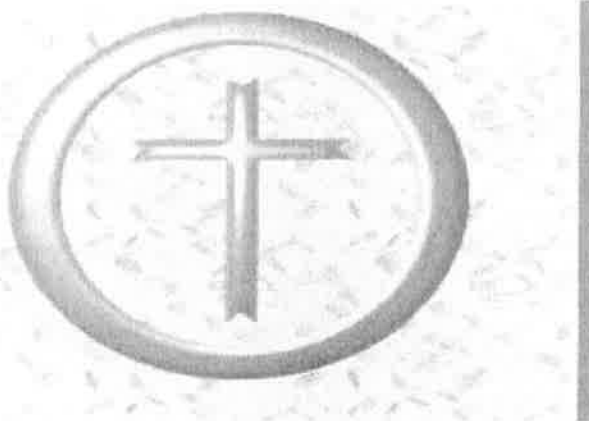
FLYERS, BROCHURE, AND CERTIFICATE

APPENDIX C
Focus Group Flyer



REACHING TO PRESERVE AND SAVE OUR BROTHERS
African-American Males Ages 16-24
In support of Rev. Kelvin D. Redmond, Sr
A Doctor of Ministry Candidate
At New York Theological Seminary

Antioch Baptist Church of Hempstead, NY
Rev. Dr. Phillip E. Elliott, Pastor



Our first "Red T-Shirt Event." A focus group discussion on "Why most African-American males ages 16-24 are not in church." If the church is not influencing our young men; then what is? Come out and **identify** with your brothers; come out and show **love** for your brothers; come out because you **care** about your brothers; come out and **stand** with your brothers; come out and **learn** from your brothers; come out and **teach** your brothers how to preserve and save our brothers. **Date: April 5, 2008, 10:00 AM** at Antioch Baptist Church.

Antioch Baptist Church of Hempstead, NY
Rev. Dr. Phillip E. Elliott, Pastor

94 James LL Burrell Ave.
Hempstead, NY 11550

Phone: 516-485-1499


April 5, 2008

Motto: "You are my Brother; I was sent to preserve your life and to save your life." Gen. 45:7-8

Focus Group Flyer
Antioch Baptist Church of Hempstead, NY

APPENDIX

Panel Discussion Flyer



REACHING TO PRESERVE AND SAVE OUR BROTHERS

African-American Males Ages 16-24

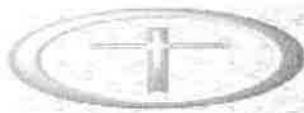
In support of Rev. Kelvin D. Redmond, Sr

A Doctor of Ministry Candidate

At New York Theological Seminary

Antioch Baptist Church of Hempstead, NY

Rev. Dr. Phillip E. Elliott, Pastor



Our third "Red T-Shirt Event." A panel discussion on "What is happening with African American Males?"

- 32 percent of African American males are unemployed.
- 40 percent of African American males in the criminal justice system, either on probation, on parole or in prison.
- So many African American Males are on the low end of the literacy scale and dropping out of school.
- 41 percent of the special education children are African American, and 85 percent of them are male.

Are they prepared for the world outside the door?

Are they aware of the destructive realities of a negative lifestyle?

What message are we sending our young men today?

Come out and **identify** with your brothers; come out and show **love** for your brothers; come out because you **care** about your brothers; come out and **stand** with your brothers; come out and **learn** from your brothers; come out and **teach** your brothers how to preserve and save our brothers. **Date: May 17, 2008, 10:00 AM** at

Antioch Baptist Church of Hempstead, NY
Rev. Dr. Phillip E. Elliott, Pastor

94 James L. Burrell Ave.
Hempstead, NY 11550

Phone: 516-483-1499


May 17, 2008

Motto: "You are my Brother; I was sent to preserve your life and to save your life." Gen. 43:7-8

Flyer-Breakfast Panel Discussion

May 17, 2008

APPENDIX C

Project Flyer



REACHING TO PRESERVE AND SAVE OUR BROTHERS

REACHING AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES AGES 16-24



For the first time in Black history, we are seeing an unchurched generation of young African-American males. We must reach them, to teach them in order to keep them. Without a ministry to reach them, the church risks losing a generation of men. Our plan is to improve the presence and participation of young African-American males (ages 16-24) in church through a mentorship support group. By providing coaching, role models and emotional support, we intend to keep them from going astray, and to give true meaning to their life.

REACHING AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES AGES 16-24

In support of Kelvin D. Bodemond, Sr.,
Deputy of Ministry Candidate at NYTS
An Associate Minister at
Antioch Baptist Church, of Hempstead, NY
Rev., Dr. Phillip E. Elliott, Pastor

Phone: 516-647-2372
Fax: 516-378-6675
Email: kdbodemond@mindspring.com



QUOTE: "YOU ARE MY BROTHER; I WAS SENT TO PRESERVE YOUR LIFE AND TO SAVE YOUR LIFE." GENESIS 15:7-8

Project Flyer

APPENDIX C

Mentoring Flyer

ANTIOCH REACHING AND MENTORING AFRICAN-
AMERICAN MALES AGES 16-24 BREAKFAST

Date: 10/18/2008

Time: 10:00 am

Become a mentor to young African-American males ages 16-24. As a mentor you will promise to do everything you can to identify with, love, care, stand, learn and teach your brother as an African-American male. As a mentee you will promise to do everything you can to make your mentor proud.

- Be a mentor to your son
- Be a mentor to a neighbor's son
- Be a mentor to a relative; a brother or cousin
- Be a mentor to a young man in the community
- Be a mentor to a single parent son

Training will be provided in reaching and mentoring young men.

Motto: "You are my brother: I was sent to preserve your life and to save your life." Gen 45:7-8"

The Antioch Baptist Church at Hempstead

94 James Burrell Ave
Hempstead, NY 11550

Phone: 516-485-1499
Fax: 516-378-6675

**Project Flyer – Mentoring Conference
October 18, 2008**

APPENDIX C Project Brochure

**The Challenge is to
Reach African-
American Males Ages
16-24**

For the first time in French history, we are seeing an unbridled generation of young African-American



creation of men. Our plan is to improve the presence and participation of young African-American males (ages 16-24) in church through a mentorship support group. By providing a coaching, role models, and emotional support, we intend to keep them from going astray, and to give true meaning to their lives.

The Plan to Reach African-American Males Ages 16-24

The expected outcome of this ministry is to raise the members in Antioch Baptist Church and the community of faith about the need to reach young African-American males now before it is too late, to increase the visibility of the church in matters concerning young African-American males, to help prevent the moral decline of African-American males in family and community, to present a more positive image of young African-American males, and to provide ongoing mentoring and support to young African-American males and thereby increase their presence and participation in church.

Goals and Strategies

The goal is to recruit and teach a large young cohort to preach and to become mentors to young African-American males ages 15-24. As a mentor you will promise to do everything you can to *assist* with your brother as an African-American male to *live* your brother as an African-American male to *cure* for you brother as an African-American male to *eat* along with your brother as an African-American male, to *fight* from your brother as a African-American male, and to *teach* your brother as a African-American male. The mentee will promise to do everything he can to *relate* his friend graduate high school college to employment to interest in the past to his perspective his church.

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BEING ALONE

It's all up to you, Alvin.
©1986



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tion.

We must attempt to find reasonable solutions to the great frustration of underemployment presently afflicting countless young African-American males. We must develop solutions to the economic plight of the "lost generation" of young African-American males.

to support of Robert D. Anderson, R.
A. Dutton & Company, Cambridge.
At New York: The National Academy
of Arts and Sciences, New York.
At New York: The National Academy of
Arts and Sciences, New York.
New York: The National Academy of
Arts and Sciences, New York.

Phone: 516-647-2332
Fax: 516-647-5675
Email: kyltrd@univispc-ny.com

APPENDIX C

Project Brochure

How to Preserve and Save your Brothers!

Identify with your Brothers

Love your Brothers

Care for your Brothers

Stand with your Brothers

Learn from your Brothers

Teach your Brothers



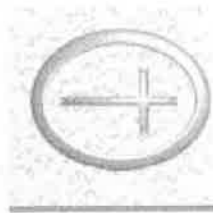
Author: "I have my Brother, I am now in power
serve your life and be sure your life" (1974-75)

In Support of Kelvin D. Redmond, Sr.
A Doctor of Ministry Candidate
At New York Theological Seminary
An Associate Minister
At Antioch Baptist Church, Hempstead, NY
Rev. Dr., Phillip E. Elliott, Pastor



Reaching African-American Males Ages 16-24

In Support of Kelvin D. Redmond, Sr.
A Doctor of Ministry Candidate
At New York Theological Seminary
An Associate Minister
At Antioch Baptist Church, Hempstead, NY
Rev. Dr., Phillip E. Elliott, Pastor



We can do it!

516-647-2372

Project Brochure (Outside Page)

APPENDIX C

MENTORING TRAINING CERTIFICATE



This Certificate of Participation is granted to

Rev. Kelvin D. Redmond

For attending a two-hour Mentor/Mentee

Training on

Saturday, October 18, 2008 at

Antioch Baptist Church, Hempstead, NY

*This project is in support of Rev. Kelvin D. Redmond, Sr. a Doctor of Ministry Candidate at New York Theological Seminary:
"Reaching to Preserve and Save Our Brothers – African American Males Ages 16-24"*

Reverend Dr. Phillip E. Elliott, Pastor

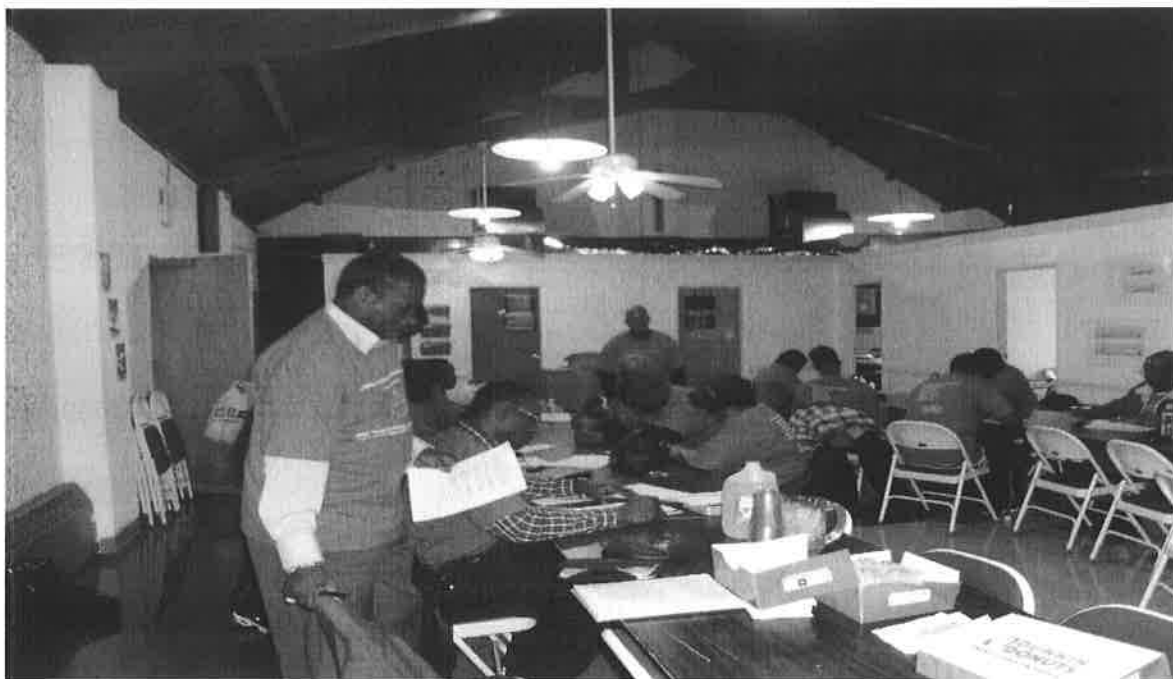
C. Williams, M.A., Educational Leadership & Technology, Trainer



APPENDIX D
EVENT PHOTOS

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP



April 5, 2008 Focus Group

“Red T-Shirt Event”

Picture from focus group forum at Antioch Baptist Church at Hempstead, NY.

APPENDIX D
FOCUS GROUP



April 5, 2008 Focus Group

“Red T-Shirt Event”

Picture from focus group forum at Antioch Baptist Church at Hempstead, NY.

APPENDIX D
FOCUS GROUP



April 5, 2008 Focus Group

“Red T-Shirt Event”

Picture from focus group forum held at Antioch Baptist Church at Hempstead, NY.

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP



April 5, 2008 Focus Group

"Red T-Shirt Event"

Picture from focus group forum held at Antioch Baptist Church at Hempstead, NY.

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP



April 5, 2008 Focus Group

“Red T-Shirt Event”

Picture from focus group forum held at Antioch Baptist Church at Hempstead, NY

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP



Focus Group
At The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Roosevelt, NY

APPENDIX D

PANEL DISCUSSION



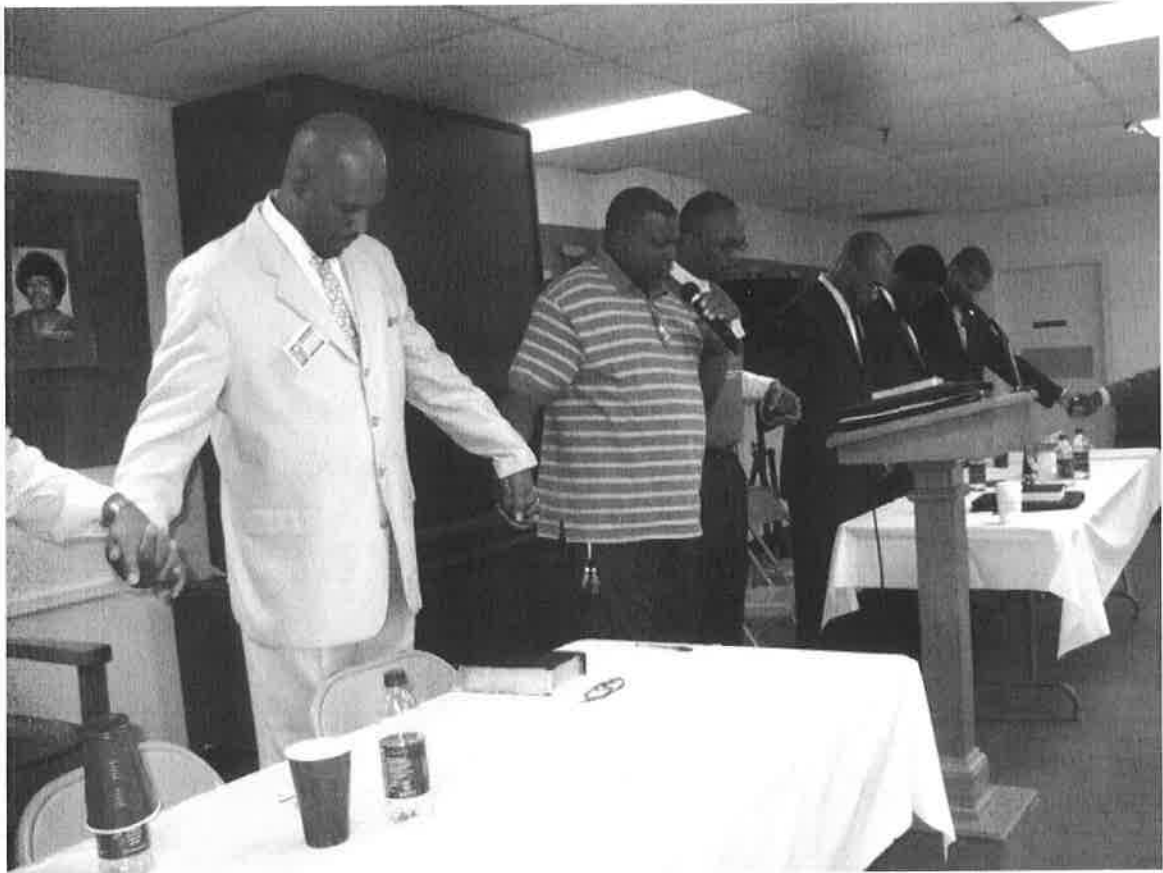
APPENDIX D

PANEL DISCUSSION



May 17, 2008 Panel Discussion
Antioch Baptist Church at Hempstead, NY

APPENDIX D
PANEL DISCUSSION



PANEL BREAKFAST

MAY 17, 2008

APPENDIX D
PANEL DISCUSSION



PANEL BREAKFAST

MAY 17, 2008

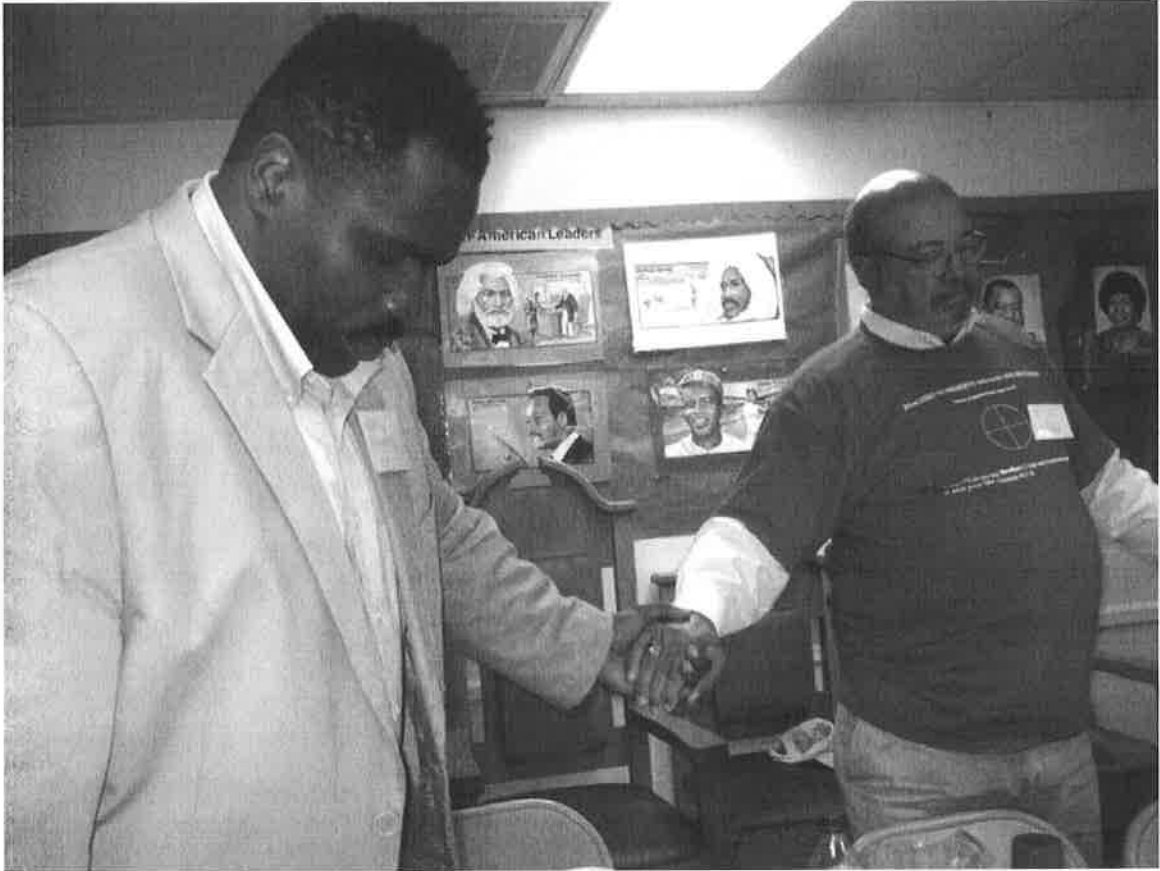
APPENDIX D

PANEL DISCUSSION



APPENDIX D

PANEL DISCUSSION



PANEL BREAKFAST

MAY 17, 2008

APPENDIX D

PANEL DISCUSSION



PANEL BREAKFAST

MAY 17, 2008

APPENDIX D

PANEL DISCUSSION



PANEL BREAKFAST

MAY 17, 2008

APPENDIX D

PANEL DISCUSSION



PANEL BREAKFAST

MAY 17, 2008

APPENDIX D

PANEL DISCUSSION

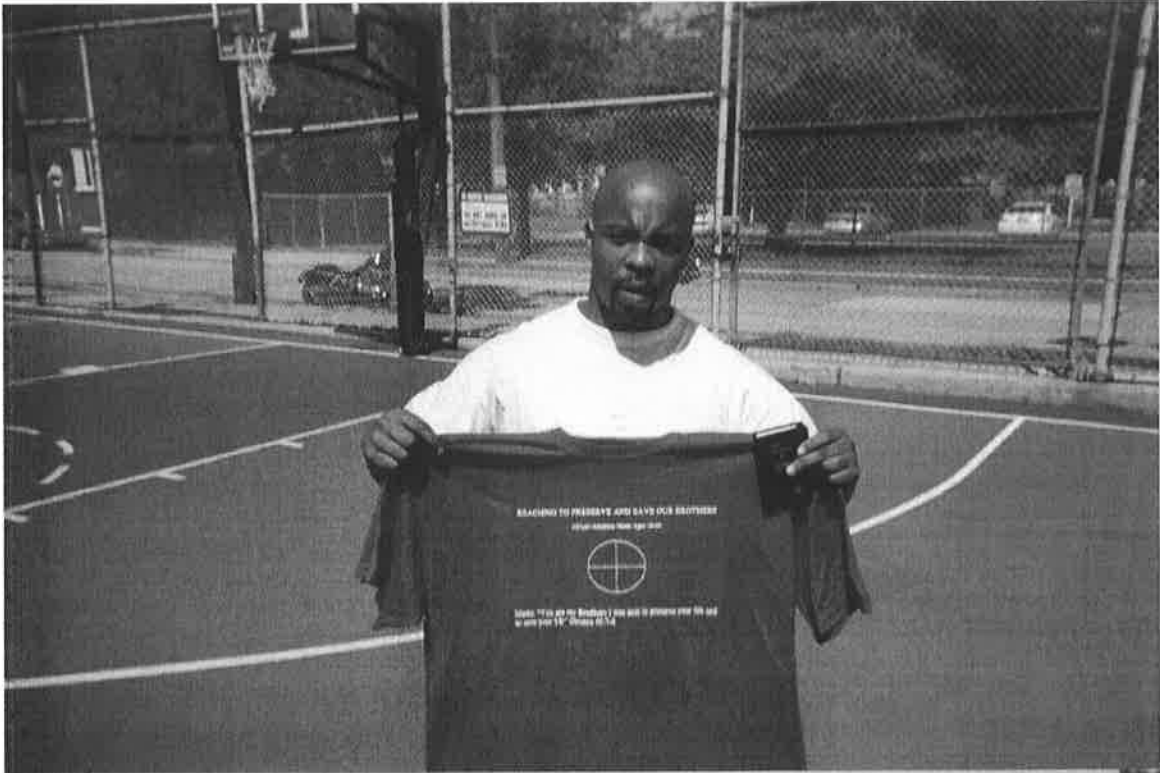


PANEL BREAKFAST

MAY 17, 2008

APPENDIX D

PARK MINISTRY



Reaching at Centennial Park
Roosevelt, New York

APPENDIX D
PARK MINISTRY



Sunday Morning Basketball

Westbury Blvd Park, Uniondale, New York

APPENDIX D
PARK MINISTRY



Sunday Morning Basketball

Westbury Blvd Park, Uniondale, NY

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